Ad Infinitum

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Ad Infinitum

by MiniIcecube

Summary

> “...again and again in the same way; forever.”
>
> Every 50 years, a small, but ancient village selects a virgin to send as a sacrifice to Lord Hannibal Lecter’s castle in exchange for his protection. At the ripe age of 27, Will happens to be chosen out of all those born and raised to be sacrificial lambs. Was it just a stroke of bad luck, or something more?
>
> -OR-
>
> Will is a virginal sacrifice, who comes from an old village with even older customs. Hannibal, the great vampire lord of the region, is an unusual specimen, even among his vampire counterparts.

Notes

> Hello, lovely readers! This is a completed work and will be updated weekly. I hope you enjoy.
>
> And, of course, for legal purposes: I do not own any of these characters, nor their respective franchises.

The Sacrificial Lamb

Chapter Summary

Will comes from an old village with even older customs. Hannibal is the great vampire lord of the region…

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Will is just one unfortunate soul of many who were sent down the path to the castle of the dark lord, Hannibal Lecter. Dressed in all white with his family's ring, like some caricature of a bride, he slowly but surely traverses through the forest. He can feel a cold sweat already beading up on the back of his neck. This was supposed to be an honor, and everyone before him treated it as such. So why did he feel like he might not even make the trip before fainting? Still, Will marches on, determined to keep his village safe, at the very least.

It takes about a full day's walk to make it to the castle. He had left his family behind just before daybreak and now it's already pitch black. Dark clouds hang ominously overhead, blotting out the moon and stars. Tentatively, Will reaches for the knocker and makes his presence known.

"U-um hello," He swallows and glances around a little then knocks again, clearing his throat, "Hello?"

As if on cue, the door creaks open. Hannibal, of course, has a penchant for dramatics. He has no need to meet Will at the door when they both know exactly what he's there for. After all, his presence tends to strike fear into those he meets. And fear just ruins the blood, makes it bitter.

He blinks a few times then takes a deep breath and makes his way inside, he allows himself to look around and at least marvel at how elaborate and nice everything is. He guesses this is a good way to die: Sacrificing himself for his family and friends in a grand castle. It couldn't be that bad anyways. At least that's what he tells himself as he makes his way through all the different rooms and halls.

Hannibal had already been watching Will as he aimlessly traversed his abode. His curiosity eventually gets the better of him and, in a puff of black smoke, he materializes behind him. The sound of rushing blood and Will's scent were tempting enough. 'Another virgin,' he muses to himself. In a sort of trance, he moves closer, hands hovering just above Will's upper arms as he leans in to sniff right over his carotid artery.

"My, aren't you a delicacy, little lamb," he mutters, already experiencing a sort of high from Will's absolutely intoxicating aroma.

Will flinches away, making a small sound of shock as he backs himself away from him, "Did you just… smell me?" I mean, he should've guessed the owner of this castle would be some creep but he'd never expected it to be a good looking creep. He can't really make himself move, he's too busy staring into this… thing's eyes. They're almost blood red and while it should freak him out, it draws him in.

Hannibal, on the other hand, is surprised to see such a familiar face. Galahad. ‘But it can’t be,’ he tells himself. Galahad is dead, that much is certain. Too much time has passed for that to not be the case. Besides, this sacrificial lamb is far too young to be the one he knew, even if he was given that ‘gift’.

“Difficult to avoid,” he says with a soft hum. He’s sure to look deeply into Will’s stormy ocean eyes. He can tell Will is drawn to him, but it’s different than usual. It’s evident that he’s not falling prey to his influence completely. A very rare specimen indeed.

He watches him a moment longer then relaxes, “You don’t… look like a monster.” He’s still studying it like it’s the most interesting thing in the world… it? Him? Was this thing some type of delusional human that takes pleasure in killing people or something that just masquerades as a human?

“Monsters can look like anything and anyone, little lamb.” He takes a slow lap around Will, examining him intently. Will’s thoughts are loud, almost deafening compared to the previous sacrifices. Especially his almost constant “It’s midnight. My name is Will Graham. I am alive” circling around his mind like a goldfish in a bowl that’s two sizes too small. “Tell me, Will: Do I frighten you?”

“No, not really. I’m mostly just curious.” He keeps his head down in hopes of avoiding eye contact.

Hannibal hums and takes Will’s cheeks in his hands before tilting his head up, wanting to make eye contact. He inches his face closer to Will’s, having no real sense of personal space. “And what has your curiosity piqued, young one?”

He’s blushing like a fool, he knows he is because his face feels like it’s on fire. He decides that maybe this… man isn’t so bad if he’s at least treating him kindly. “You’re nice. You aren’t immediately ripping into me like I assumed you would.”

Hannibal lets out a hum before speaking. “You’re my guest, for now. And I treat my guests with the same respect they offer me. You’ll do well to remember that, Will.”

Will thinks for a second and leans into his hands, figuring there was no harm in letting himself be treated like a lamb being pampered before the slaughter, “I appreciate that.”

He nods in approval at Will’s answer. “Alright, now that introductions are over, let me show you to your room,” he says with a little smile before leading the way down a long corridor.

Will doggedly follows him, his head tilted a little in confusion. “So I’ll be staying here?” None of this really makes sense right now. The monster he’d been told about isn’t really a monster. Or maybe he still is. Will isn’t so sure. But now he’s being given a room to stay in like he’s some type of guest.

He turns around to speak to him, walking gracefully, almost floating backwards to do so. Which isn’t difficult, considering the fact he has memorized his castle thousands of times over by now. “Yes, you will. I’d like for you to be comfortable throughout your time here.”

While watching him Will can’t help but smile, he’s kind of cute. Maybe he’ll have mercy on Will and let him live out his days locked away in a castle. “That’s very kind of you, sir.” He smiles at him, flashing a sliver of his sharp fangs. “Please, just ‘Hannibal’ will do.”

He can’t help it when he looks at his fangs, a bit awestruck by them and having the urge to feel those perfect, pearly blades, “Those are beautiful.” Will then proceeds to mentally slap himself for being such a fool.

Hannibal, however, lets out a hearty chuckle at that, definitely thinking that Will is one of the more interesting sacrifices they’ve so graciously sent to him. He’ll most certainly enjoy having this one around.

“Thank you, little lamb.”

“Why do you call me that? ‘Little lamb.’” He’s genuinely curious, no one’s ever called him anything like that.

“That is your role, after all. You’re a pure little thing sent to a den of sin and death.”

“So you call all of your sacrifices lambs then?” Will doesn’t know why the thought of that makes him jealous, it just does.

“Mmm not necessarily. You’re the first that I’ve felt compelled to call that. You’re the purest out of all the ones they’ve delivered to me,” he answers with a little smirk. He can practically taste the jealousy, the envy, radiating off of Will. It’s a little amuse-bouche in and of itself.

“And why is that?” Will hums and tries to think of a reason himself but can’t find one, so he just waits for an answer.

“Well, like all the others, you’re a virgin. That much is evident by your scent alone. Aside from that, you have hardly any temptations housed in that curious mind of yours for me to grasp onto and use to my advantage. And that is quite interesting indeed, little lamb.”

He knows he’s blushing again, so he dips his head down to hide it and bites his lip, wondering how this guy could know all of that.

Hannibal lets out a soft hum and stops in his tracks before moving forward, taking Will’s warm cheeks into his cold hands once more. “Such a little sheltered thing you are. Thrust cruelly into the horrors of the world before you got to truly learn the ways of it. I’m sorry I couldn’t protect you in this life.”

Will can’t help but lean into his hands with a soft sound. He’s frowning though, because he knows that means he is going to be killed instead of being kept around like an animal that was raised to be slaughtered but ended up being too cute to kill. He just enjoys the gentleness for a moment, how soft Hannibal's hands feel, how careful he is. Will could never really imagine him as a monster.

He caresses Will’s cheeks for a moment. “You didn’t deserve to be bred for this fate. None of you did.”

“No one said you had to kill us, that’s your choice.” He swallows and keeps looking at the floor. That was probably the wrong thing to say and he’s about to have his head ripped off, he can sense it.

Hannibal just sighs and pulls away. “I don’t have a choice in the matter. Not really.” That’s all he says before turning around and continues walking, set on leading Will to his room.

Will frowns the whole way there. He only looks around when he knows Hannibal isn’t watching him. Everything is so… grand here. It’s beautiful. He gets lost in his thoughts after a bit and is just looking around at everything they pass.

Hannibal stops them in front of an elaborately carved mahogany door and turns the handle. It’s already well-furnished with fine velvets and furs. There’s likely an obscene amount of animal horns and antlers, and heavy draperies laden with biblical imagery. “This will be your room, little lamb. I hope it’s to your liking.”

The lamb looks around for a moment, running his fingers over the blankets on his bed and trying his best to hide how his expression changes when he notices how soft they are. “The antlers are a little scary.” He mumbles and bites his lip.

“I can have them taken down for you, if you’d prefer?” he asks gently, his last vestiges of humanity seeping through. “I can also procure whatever decorations or furnishings you’d like. Don’t hesitate to ask me for anything.”

“Just the antlers gone will be fine, thank you.” He gives Hannibal a closed off, almost pained, smile and dips his head.

“Alright, then. I’ll get those removed as soon as possible,” he replies with a nod. “For now,

I'll let you rest. I hope to see you tomorrow." He simply nods and turns around before getting undressed for bed. To Will, it didn't matter if Hannibal was still there. He doesn't know exactly why that doesn't matter but he'd rather not think about it.

When he's finished preparing for bed he slips underneath the blankets and melts at how soft and warm everything is. He'd never been in a bed this nice before. It takes him seconds to fall asleep all snuggled and wrapped up.

Hannibal takes a moment to politely examine his "offering". His keen eyes pick up every little detail and he's most certainly not disappointed. Though, that's all he does before leaving and shutting the rather hefty door behind him. He then goes to spend the wee hours of the morning as he always does: enjoying a glass of sanguine red wine in a plush, dark sitting room before retiring for the day. A grandfather clock chimes and rings out six times, signaling the approaching dawn. And with that, he goes to rest in his own lavish bedroom.

End of chapter one.

Chapter End Notes

And that's the end of chapter one! Feel free to leave kudos and comments at your discretion. The journey continues next week…

The Garden of Earthly Delights

Chapter Summary

Hannibal partakes in his usually unusual feedings. However, Will isn't used to having his senses indulged this much…

Smut ensues.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Hannibal wakes up promptly at eight in the evening, just as dusk is starting to fall upon them. He goes about his typical nightly routine: taking an indulgent bath with various perfumes that don't assault his sensitive senses, combing his hair, and dressing in his usual finery. Once he's presentable, he makes his way to Will's room, wanting breakfast, but without scaring the poor thing. Hannibal gently raps his knuckles on the door, making himself known.

Will is still half asleep by now, still feeling tired from his journey yesterday. But he sits up and rubs his eyes, "Come in." Hopefully Hannibal is just coming to check on him and not kill him. He's actually enjoying his time in this grand, luxurious castle. And even if the owner is a bit weird, he's oddly comforting.

He offers him a soft smile upon entering. "Good evening, Will. Did you sleep well?" he inquires sweetly, doing his best to be polite and courteous.

"Mhm, this bed is really nice. It was some of the best sleep I've ever had." He's smiling a little and pulling the blankets up to cover his half naked body because it'd be embarrassing for Hannibal to see him in such a state.

Hannibal takes a seat next to him on the bed with a soft hum, maintaining steady eye contact. He runs his hands across the soft velvet comforter next to where Will's hip is. "I'm glad you think so. I only bought the finest of decor and furniture for my home."

Will blushes and stares down at his own hands, feeling trapped almost, "Thank you, that's very considerate. I hope that people in the past have felt the same way about your kindness."

"I'm assure you, they did. I made sure of it. However, they took advantage of it. I'm sure you won't make that mistake, will you, little lamb?" he asks sweetly. Too sweet. Almost as though poisoned honey dripped from his lips, a saccharine warning.

"No sir, I won't." He mumbles and shakes his head, "I'm already receiving more than I deserve."

"I wouldn't say 'more than'." He lets out a little sigh before speaking again. "I'm not like the other lords, Will. I don't slaughter and maim without reason. While it may be an antiquated practice, I enjoy this method because it allows for them to prove their worth to me. I give them a fair chance, little lamb."

He finally looks up and blinks at him stupidly, "What's that supposed to mean?"

“I feed because I need to, Will. There’s no denying that. But I don’t simply kill them right away. I enjoy human companionship. Though, as soon as I don’t, that’s when the mutual understanding ends. And there are no second chances.”

“So… if I keep you happy, and pleased, you’ll keep me alive?” He looks confused but on the inside his heart is pounding with hope and he’s smiling like a fool.

“Oh no, not something that difficult,” he jokes. “I’m merely asking for respect.”

“Well I’m pretty sure I’m already doing that.” He smiles a little and scoots away just a bit, “I should get dressed if you wish to stay here.” Hannibal looks him up and down for a split second, wondering if now’s the time to explain his proclivities when it comes to feeding. “Well, you may not have to.”

Will tenses little and swallows, not sure what that entails. It’s more of an instinct when he curls up to hide his body, “Okay, if you say so, sir.”

Hannibal mulls over his options and decides it may be best to explain this to Will. He deserves to be well informed, after all. “Even among the other lords, the way I feed is… unorthodox, so to speak.” Will decides to just nod and listen, genuinely curious about this.

“Alright, it’s only truly considered unusual because I ask for permission first, but I digress.” He shifts a little in his spot before starting again. “Much like how humans enjoy adding various spices to their meals to enhance the flavor, I prefer blood to have specific ‘additives.’”

“Like what?” He asks, tilting his head a little. Maybe this wouldn’t be so bad. Hannibal seems caring and sweet. “Well, I personally think that blood, specifically virgin blood like yours, tastes best when you’re in the throes of passion, experiencing peak pleasure,” he says almost like a statement of fact.

“Oh…” The lamb doesn’t really know how to react so he just sits there. In his mind, it’s not like he has a choice. He could refuse Hannibal, but that would likely only get him killed. So he sighs and lets himself relax as much as he can, “Alright.”

“You can always refuse, little lamb. Remember, this companionship is founded on mutual respect and understanding.”

“No, it’s fine.” He mumbles and uncovers himself just a bit so everything from his hips up can be seen. Hannibal hums while running a hand up Will’s abdomen and stops it at his chest. “Are you absolutely certain?”

“Yes sir.” His voice is shaking and he knows he must look like a timid animal right now, shying away from him ever so slightly. He rests his hand over Will’s fluttering heart and relishes how warm his skin is compared to the marble-like coolness of his own hand. He lets that hand move upwards to cup his cheek, brushing his thumb over Will’s lips. “You’re beautiful, my little lamb.”

“Th-thank you, sir.” He mumbles and leans into him a little. “Of course, darling.” Hannibal smiles softly at him while gazing into his eyes, marveling at the storm of apprehension and want swirling in the gray sea of his irises, a curious combination. His thumb moves to Will’s cheek, cold palm blanketing warm skin. Hannibal finds his lips ghosting along his lamb’s jaw and down to his throat. The vampire is sure to be gentle, not wanting to startle the poor thing. Will leans into his touches with a soft sound, baring his neck to him like captured prey. Hannibal lets out a low chuckle in response.

“You’re much too pure for this world.” Fortunately for himself, he always enjoys crumbling one of God’s devout followers.

Will is a little frightened by that statement but tries his best to act unfazed, “And what are you going to do about it?” It’s an innocent question, really. Any person in his position would ask it.

“Mm we’ll see. I don’t wish to move too fast.”

“I was only asking so I’d know what to expect.” He blinks at Hannibal a few times, “Did you think I meant it in a different way?”

He chuckles again. “Of course not. I’m just not sure if you’re quite ready yet.” Hannibal hums while standing up, straightening out his clothes as he does so. “Maybe in another night or two.”

Will frowns and bites his lip, “Well… you could at least stay and spend time with me?”

To be honest, he didn’t want to be alone. Will isn’t a social person but he also hates being alone with his thoughts, they’re too loud and he can never escape him. Hannibal has a hard time saying no to Will. Him and his cursed pathetic puppy eyes. He smiles and sits back down.

“Alright. I’ll be nice and keep you company.”

“Thank you, sir.” The lamb smiles and thinks for a moment then snuggles up to him, tucking himself into his side and humming happily. He blinks at him a few times, not entirely sure what to do when experiencing human affection.

With a soft hum, Hannibal reaches down to run a pale hand through Will’s dark tresses. He smiles a bit at how soft and fluffy his hair is. Will can’t really remember the last time he felt this at peace but he doesn’t want it to stop so he makes a soft happy sound and presses up into his hand. He keeps up his gentle petting for a good while before moving his hand to caress Will’s cheek. “Are you hungry, little lamb?”

“Yes but I didn’t want to roam without knowing if it was allowed or not so I’ve been in my room all day.” Hannibal smiles down at him, patting his cheek a little.

“This is your home now, Will. You’re free to explore it as you see fit.” He pauses a moment before adding something else. “…Except for my private cellar. I’ve everything organized in an almost ludicrously specific manner and would prefer it if it wasn’t disturbed.”

“Of course.” He nods and looks up, pressing a careful kiss to his cheek, “Thank you.” He lets out a little hum while turning his head to rest his forehead against Will’s.

“It’s my pleasure, little lamb.” The lamb smiles and shifts so he’s able to reach up and hold Hannibal’s face, his own expression changing a little when he feels how cold the other man is. Hannibal tilts his head a bit at the change in his demeanor. “Is something the matter?”

“You feel like ice.” He pets Hannibal’s cheek while frowning. He chuckles and nods in response, resting a hand on Will’s. He then turns his face into his wrist to smell the blood rushing in those veins.

“I’m sure I do.”

“Why is that?” He swallows and presses his wrist closer, figuring that there’s no harm in it.

“It’s a part of what I am, little lamb,” he mumbles while kissing the skin there. He stops himself from having a little sample, however, just knowing he will want more after. Will notices his hesitation and rubs his wrist against Hannibal’s nose just a little, “Why’re you holding back?”

He lets out a soft huff, glancing at him. “You’re not ready yet. I know you’ll taste absolutely divine with the proper care and treatment.” Hannibal opens his mouth, grazing his fangs along Will’s skin. With a shiver, he glides his tongue over the raised abrasions. “And I fully intend on waiting.”

“O-okay.” He nods and swallows thickly, letting him do what he likes.

“So well behaved,” he muses out loud to himself, nuzzling his wrist.

“You like that I am, I’m guessing?” He’s almost in a trance, watching Hannibal like he’s some kind of oddity.

“I do,” he says with a small nod. “It tells me you’ll likely uphold our little bargain.”

“Of course I will.” He smiles nervously, “I wouldn’t want to disappoint.”

“I doubt you could. I have faith in you,” he jokes a little, wanting to keep the mood light, though it’s a bit of a double entendre.

“I think you may have too much faith in me, Hannibal.”

“Do I, now?”

Will hums and tilts his head, “Well, I don’t really know about anything.”

“Would you like to learn?” Hannibal inquires with a mischievous smile. “I’ve lived long enough to have all sorts of knowledge and skills at my disposal,” he says in a somewhat suggestive manner. He doesn’t want to push Will into this, but he also hasn’t fed since the last sacrifice, for reasons he wouldn’t care to admit, so he’s in a sort of rush. Though, the truth of the matter is, in his old age, he found immortality to be almost unbearably lonely. Against his better judgment, he had gotten far too attached to the last sacrifice from the village. However, that’s the last thing he needs circulating around the gossip mongers of vampire high society. His yearning for human companionship will be a secret he takes to his grave, if he ever has one, that is.

Will shudders and swallows while nodding and leaning in to press kisses to his neck and jaw. “Teach me.” Hannibal glances in his direction for a brief moment. Will’s thoughts nor scent bely his previous request. This unhindered willingness is certainly refreshing.

“Are you sure about that?”

“I’ll have to learn eventually, might as well do so now.”

“I admire your enthusiasm, little lamb,” he says with a soft hum. Will is a rather interesting creature, compared to his previous “companions”. He is pure, yet willing. A walking contradiction of faith and desire.

Will blushes and dips his head a little, “Thank you, sir.”

“Please, Will. There’s no need for formalities. I insist that you simply call me “Hannibal”. Can you do that for me?” Will nods and rests his head on his shoulder, not able to formulate a verbal response without stuttering.

Hannibal chuckles at his timidity, finding it befitting for someone so unsullied as the man before him. Once Hannibal’s eyes have had their fill, he angles the lamb and forward to nose at Will’s throat. He breathes in his scent and exhales with a delighted sigh. That hint, that little tease of the senses is not enough. Hannibal licks a stripe up the length of his neck, relishing the taste of him playing on his cold appendage.

“H-Hannibal.” Will says, shuddering and feeling like his face is on fire, “Careful.” He feels there is no use in telling him that. Hannibal will ultimately kill him, if he so chooses. He looks up at Will, eyes narrowed in a slight warning, though his overall demeanor is still sweet.

“You worry too much, little lamb. Just enjoy yourself.” Hannibal then begins sucking marks into his neck, watching the reds and purples that bloom just under the skin. He’s careful of his teeth, however, not wanting to frighten the poor dear. Will is whimpering and letting out soft sounds, too focused to really say or do much. He clings to the back of Hannibal’s shirt and swallows.

Hannibal is much too busy painting Will’s neck with bruises and burst blood vessels. He lets a hand slide down to pet his belly, honestly just wanting to examine and feel every bit of his prized lamb. Will arches into his hand with a soft sound, liking how gently he’s being treated. How slow and considerate Hannibal is. It’s nothing near what he expected from this. He keeps up the soft and light pleasure for a while, making sure Will is used to being touched in this way. He lets his hand drift lower and rests it below his navel. “How are you feeling, little lamb?” he inquires in a gentle, sweet tone.

“D-different, a little weird. I’ve never experienced anything like this.” He mumbles while feeling embarrassed.

“It’s alright to feel a little out of sorts. You don’t find it unpleasant, do you?” “No, no I feel good.” Good is the only way to really describe how he feels. And that answer is sufficient enough for Hannibal, who takes that as a sign he can go a little further.

He dips his hand even lower, experimentally brushing his fingertips along the underside of Will’s erection.

“Mmf wh-what-“ Will can’t think of a response, he just knows that this feels good and he does not want it to stop. Hannibal doesn’t cease those gentle touches, carefully examining his face for any signs that he’s uncomfortable. Once he is sure Will is perfectly fine with this, he increases the pressure of his hand, palming at him with the utmost care. Will turns into an absolute mess after that, bucking up into his hand and letting out sounds he did not know he was capable of producing. Hannibal grins, always enjoying watching even the most pious and proudest of individuals fall apart while experiencing pleasure.

“There we go, darling. Does that feel good?” All Will can do in response is nod and bite his lip. He chuckles at that, pausing altogether. “When I ask you a question, I expect a verbal answer, little lamb.”

“Yes-yes sir, it feels really good.” He manages to stammer out and whines when he cannot get any friction. Satisfied with that answer, Hannibal decides not to be too much of a tease and slips his deft hand lower, stroking him slowly. That action alone has Will squirming and whining, not sure if he wants more or if this is already too much.

Although he has no intentions of going much further than this, Hannibal has no objections to keeping his lamb satisfied. After all, he’s behaved himself quite well and obedient pets deserve rewards. However, the vampire’s already in short supply of virgin blood, given he only has Will to feed from. If he slakes all of his urges now, he’ll only be in a worse situation. Besides, he saves sex for the companions only truly deserving of it, preferably when they come to him of their own volition and beg for it.

He entertains the thought of Will doing just that, but only for a moment before the lamb calls out to him. “H-Hannibal feels too tight.” He mumbles as if the other man can read his mind and know how much pressure he’s feeling in his stomach right now. Which, perhaps unbeknownst to Will, he can. Though instead of giving Will what would actually help him and working him until he releases, he just stops. Of course, Will had been a perfect little lamb for him, so he doesn’t plan on leaving him unsatisfied for long. The loss of contact makes him keen and he whimpers as he rolls onto his stomach to grind into the bed, not feeling patient at all. For anyone else, that would be a turn on, but when it comes to Hannibal, that was the wrong move. He tuts and gets Will facing him again. “That’s not how you thank someone who’s treating you so generously, is it?” he asks in a mock chastising tone.

“I-I’m sorry, sir, please don’t be angry with me I’ll do better please.” He starts crying because he figures this is the end. He thinks he disrespected Hannibal and must now pay the price for it. “Please sir, one more chance. I can be good.”

Hannibal gently cups his cheeks, shushing and consoling him sweetly. “Now, now. There’s no need for tears, little lamb,” he whispers while brushing away Will’s lacrimal essence with his thumbs. “I forgive you.”

“Thank you, s-sir.” He’s still sniffling and crying as he leans into Hannibal’s hands. He actually thought he had messed up and cost himself his life. He can’t stop hyperventilating at the thought of what could’ve happened if it hadn’t been Hannibal he’d been sacrificed to.

“Deep breaths, darling. Inhale for three, hold for three, and then exhale.” Despite breathing being completely unnecessary for vampires, Hannibal still decides it’s worth demonstrating

for Will. “Can you do that for me?” Will nods and does as he’s told, doing it exactly like Hannibal had done, even though his breathing is more forced. After a few minutes he calms and swallows.

“Please don’t leave me.” Hannibal gently caresses Will’s cheeks and rests his forehead on his.

“I will never leave you, my dearest one.” He didn’t mean for that last bit to slip out. However, he tells himself that it’s not the time to fret over something like that. Will smiles shakily and hugs him close, burying his face in his neck to hide from the world.

He carefully hugs him back, smoothing his hands over Will’s back. “How are you feeling now, little lamb?”

“Okay, I just got scared…” he whispers and noses at the crook of Hannibal’s neck.

“You needn’t be scared of me, Will. You’ve done nothing to violate our agreement.”

“Well, the way you reacted made me think I had.”

“I’m sorry to have frightened you, darling. I was merely teasing,” he says while reaching up to card his fingers through Will’s hair.

“It’s okay.” Will murmurs, already half asleep from having his hair played with.

“Get some rest,” he practically coos to him. “I’ll procure some proper food for you.”

He doesn’t have to tell Will twice because the poor little lamb is already asleep as soon as he’s told to, feeling exhausted. Hannibal presses a soft kiss to Will’s head as he stands upright, only leaving to cook Will something. When he was human, food and cooking were key aspects of his youth, gathering and preparing his own ingredients for flavorful survival. Now, he has all the time in the world to learn various recipes and techniques, despite never actually needing to eat. Whatever he makes goes to those who serve him, or their families. He’s not one to waste food, after all.

Still tired from his trip, Will sleeps until dinner is ready. Hannibal gets to work on making something that would definitely be palatable yet filling for him. He decides a hearty soup fits the bill and brings it to Will once it’s been successfully made. Will had drifted off into a deep sleep, snoring and shifting every now and again. Hannibal takes a moment to admire Will’s sleeping visage. He muses to himself about how effortlessly beautiful his little lamb is. The warm flush of his skin that accompanies every living creature, the tousled mane of his hair, the pure and elegant curl of his lashes. Everything about Will is humanly delicate, yet hypnotizing.

He leans in to wake the sleeping beauty with a gentle kiss to his forehead. That draws a small sound from him as Will blinks awake, glancing around a little before looking up at Hannibal. He locks eyes with Will and smiles before speaking, “I’ve brought food for you, little lamb. I have no need for human meals of my own, so I hope the flavors are to your liking.”

Will blinks a few times to wake himself up before getting propped up on the pillows with a small hum, “Thank you, Hannibal. It smells amazing.”

“I’m flattered, Will.” He sits the tray on the ornately carved bedside table and lifts the cloche. Indeed, the soup smelled divine, Hannibal already knew that much. But the flavors would turn to ash as soon as it graced his tongue, so he hopes Will enjoys the fruits of his labor, at least. He prepares a spoonful of broth and gives it a quick blow to cool before carefully slipping it into Will’s mouth. Will doesn’t think much of it and just closes his eyes so he can fully enjoy all of the flavors. After a few seconds he hums then smiles.

“This is great, I don’t think anyone’s ever cooked me anything this good.” Hannibal grins, his pride stroked by that complement. He continues spoon-feeding the lamb his meal. “I’m flattered, little lamb. I’ll be the one preparing your meals, so don’t hesitate to tell me if

there's anything specific that you'd like."

"You're already keeping me fed, it would be rude to ask for specific meals," he answers between bites. He lets out a little hum once the bowl is empty and then parts his lips to speak.

"I don't think it would. You're my guest, not my prisoner. Ergo, I would like to keep you as comfortable as possible throughout your stay here."

Will blinks a few times while thinking then hums, "I like pie… but I guess that's not really a meal." Hannibal chuckles, a low rumbling one that accompanies the thunder from the brewing storm outside.

"You're right, it's not. Though, I'd still be more than happy to bake that for you. Is there any specific kind that you prefer?"

"Apple, it's always perfect. In the warmer seasons and the cold ones too." He smiles and gives Will a polite nod. Hannibal can't exactly agree, since it's been centuries since he had been able to experience human senses in their entirety.

"Duly noted. Anything else, little lamb?"

"No thank you, just that is perfect." He's smiling a genuine smile when he says it before pressing a gentle kiss to Hannibal's cheek, who smiles even more at that sweet, chaste gesture.

"If you insist, Will."

"I do." With a soft hum more akin to a purr, Hannibal's mouth seeks the pale column of Will's neck.

This is all new to Will, and he's curious about it. Why does it make his stomach do flips? Why does it feel so nice and warm and kind of scary all at the same time? He just wants to know why.

Now, Hannibal would love to answer that question, but even he doesn't have a proper response. All he's worried about right this second is pleasuring Will and finally getting his meal after a few setbacks. After a minute or two, Will pulls him closer, wanting to go further and learn more. Plus, he's bored. There isn't much to do in a big castle that's more like a maze.

He chuckles, finding Will to be surprising him more and more when he's not completely focused on the little lamb's thoughts. Hannibal runs a hand along his thigh, finding them to be a bit thinner than he'd prefer, obviously a result of Will's almost ritualistic upbringing. They're soft and lithe, like those of the previous sacrifices before him, which is a clear indication of the village raising them to be the epitome of what they find desirable. He, on the other hand, is quite literally a Renaissance man. Now he fully intends to keep Will well-fed and plump. He will never have to work a day in his life ever again. After all, that's the picture of indulgence and wealth.

"Why am I here if you aren't doing anything with me? I thought that by now you would've had your way." Will mumbles, doing his best to catch his breath.

Hannibal makes a small sound of amusement while nosing at his throat. "I want you to enjoy yourself as much as I will, little lamb. Not only would your anxiety and fear spoil the flavor, but we are on a ground of mutual respect. Committing an act of hubris in its original definition would make me a horrid host. Wouldn't you agree?"

Will thinks for a moment then nods, feeling a little embarrassed for not thinking about that. Hannibal hums in approval. "Good. Now, just relax."

He slips his hand from Will's cheek down to his chest as he scrapes his fangs along his neck, tracing the path of a major vein. Will swallows and starts saying a prayer in his head because really doesn't want to die, but he stays relaxed as he was told to, taking slow breaths. He can feel Will's heart rate quicken beneath his fingertips, taking note of his nervousness

and changing tactics. Slowly and methodically, he presses tender kisses along his throat and collarbone. When he reaches his chest, Hannibal sucks and nibbles deep bruises into his warm flesh, careful of the sharp teeth in his maw.

"H-Hannibal, please don't make me wait." Will doesn't think he can last another second without knowing what's going to happen to him, so he tries his best to seem excited and begging. Hannibal knows that's not the case, as Will's internal prayers leave a bitter taste in his mouth. Hannibal runs his elegant fingers along his soft abdomen.

"Be patient, sweet boy. It's a virtue." This just causes Will to sigh but he behaves himself, putting his body on display for Hannibal. This elicits a sound akin to a growl out of him, something inherently animalistic. He wastes no time dipping his hand lower for the second time this evening. He firmly grasps the younger man's hardening cock and strokes him quickly while murmuring soft praises in his ear. Will immediately starts bucking into his hand, letting out small whimpers while trying to get more. Hannibal buries his face in Will's neck, a smile playing on his features.

He keeps the rhythm of his hand steady, only ever deviating from it to tease the sensitive glands at the tip with his thumb. "Han-Hannibal mmf-" Will can't think of what to do or say so he just keeps writhing and thrusting to try and get something that helps release all the pressure in his abdomen. He chuckles at all of Will's reactions, despite his growing discomfort as his slacks tighten in a poor attempt to accommodate his own arousal. None of the previous sacrifices had ever been quite this squirmy before. Hannibal oddly finds it to be rather adorable. He moves his hand harder and faster, anxious for Will to finally let go so he can feed.

Hannibal's wait isn't too terribly long because he has got Will falling apart with just that little change in movement. There's a little gleeful glint in Hannibal's eyes when Will finally caves into the pleasure, spilling over Hannibal's fingers.

He quickly sinks his teeth into the crook of his neck, practically moaning at the taste and sensation of Will's almost white-hot blood rushing over his tongue. Will's head just rolls to the side and he closes his eyes, too relaxed and boneless to think anything of the man drinking his blood. At some point he even reaches up to pull Hannibal's head closer, mumbling about feeling good.

Once Hannibal has had his fill, he relinquishes the hold his mouth has on Will's neck, panting and feeling completely rejuvenated. In his haze, he keeps his tongue on the wound for a while to staunch the bleeding, not wanting his little lamb to keel over so soon. "You did so well for me, my sweet, darling boy. Thank you."

"Y-you're welcome." He mumbles, looking dazed and almost zoned out. He sits up and procures a handkerchief from his breast pocket, wiping the blood from his own mouth before getting Will cleaned up. After making a mental note to add that to the laundry pile, he lays down to comfort his little lamb however he needs.

Will just moves to tuck himself into his chest, making a sort of soft rumbling sound when he gets in the perfect spot. He brushes a bit of hair from Will's face with a soft hum, admiring his features. "Is there anything I can get for you?"

"A bath." He murmurs and blinks up at him, "I can bathe myself I just… need to know where the tub is."

"Nonsense. I'll take you there myself, if you'll allow me?"

Will considers it for maybe half a second then nods, "Yes please, thank you." Hannibal leaves briefly to get the bath started before returning and promptly scooping Will up into his arms, along with a few of the bed furs to keep him warm. He walks with long and careful strides, not wanting to jostle Will too much. The poor little lamb is red in the face, feeling

like a pampered animal. He had never been treated this way before.

He smiles when he picks up on Will's internal raving about how foreign, yet nice it is to be treated gently. Not only that, but his flustered expression is absolutely adorable. "Is everything alright, darling?" he mutters.

"Yes." He says simply and nods then relaxes in Hannibal's arms. With nothing to bely that statement, he continues on with the short walk to the bathroom. He gets Will untangled from the furs before carefully setting him down in the tub. He's only embarrassed for a moment and once that's over he curls up in the water, humming a little at how good it feels to finally bathe after his journey and their activities. Hannibal then goes about adding oils to the water, just wanting to absolutely pamper his little lamb. After all, he deserves to be after behaving so perfectly for him all day.

Will sniffs the air for a second, wondering what the smells are then just shrugs and decides it's not really worth thinking about. He's too comfortable to think right now. Hannibal lets out a chuckle at that as he sheds his coat and rolls up his sleeves.

"It's lavender and bergamot. I didn't want to overwhelm you with anything too offensive given your current condition."

That just makes Will turn even redder than he was before. "I'm pretty sure I could handle scents."

"Just because you could, doesn't mean you should," he responds while pulling up a stool behind the bath. He ghosts his fingertips along Will's jawline, just admiring his features. Features of someone he thought was lost to him.

"What would smelling certain oils do to me?"

Hannibal is snapped out of his reverie, smiling at Will before speaking. "It could put you under more stress, make you irritable, give you a headache. Nothing life threatening, but definitely unpleasant." Will just nods and leans back to relax even more.

He takes the wash cloth from the edge of the tub and starts gently scrubbing Will down, humming a soft tune.

"Is that a specific song or did you come up with it yourself?" Will asks, too tired to open his eyes but not tired enough to sleep. Hannibal didn't even realize what tune he was humming until Will mentioned it. He feels a pang of melancholy while remembering what transpired that night and how it solidified their fates all those centuries ago. Every single one of those great men are surely dead by now, for the passage of time spares no one.

"Just something the… wife of an old friend of mine used to sing."

"It's beautiful… makes me happy." He looks up at him after a few seconds, "Didn't think you were the type to have friends though."

He chuckles while bringing the rag up to wash the now dried blood from his neck. "It was ages ago, little lamb, but I did have friends. They were the most loyal and courageous friends a man could ever have."

"They weren't like you." He mumbles, feeling sad for the man. Will had never really had friends, other than the ones he'd dream about occasionally, and those weren't even real friends no matter how real it felt in the moment.

"Yes, they weren't like me. They were loud, uncouth, but I'd give anything for just a few more moments with them," he says with a soft sigh.

"I was mostly talking about the whole… monster thing." Will laughs nervously and swallows, feeling like he's said something wrong, "I've never really had friends. I wanted them though, maybe even needed them."

"I doubt they were given the same 'gift' I was," he mutters absentmindedly while wetting Will's hair with a small pitcher. "And I'm sure you did need friends. Humans are social

animals, so it was cruel to raise you to live such a lonely life."

"I was raised for a purpose." Saying that out loud hurts Will more than it does to think about it.

He smooths a few wet strands of his hair back and out of his face. "That doesn't make it fair to you, sweet boy. You were meant to have a full life."

Will just leans into his hands with a hum and sighs, he debates saying something about how young he is. He's only a young man, he would've never gotten a full life anyway. Given those thoughts, Hannibal has now made it his goal to give Will all the experiences a person should have. He runs his hands along Will's shoulders, thinking of what they should do.

"Will, have you ever learned how to ride on horseback?"

"No, I always wanted to though. And sometimes in my dreams I would." He says, smiling just a little, "My mother told me stories about great knights who rode into battle with their brothers in arms… so I guess that's kind of where my want to ride comes from."

Hannibal smiles a little at that, reminiscing a bit about his own tales of war and bloodshed. "How about I take you to the stables tomorrow evening? I'm sure I have a horse that will be suitable for your natural riding style."

"Please?" He can't help but sound excited and sit up to look at him. His stomach feels like it's flipping from him being so happy and nervous at the same time.

"Of course," he answers with a small laugh. "We can do whatever you wish." Will smiles even more at that and lets himself relax in the tub again.

"Do you have any books here?"

"Books?" He was caught a little by surprise by the question, since it was a bit off topic. "I have my own library. It's entirely at your disposal, if that's what you desire?"

"I know it was a bit random but talking about horses just reminded me of the stories my mother used to tell and it would be a good way to pass the time when I'm alone."

Hannibal smiles, though it's a bittersweet one. He has very few memories of his mother, having gone over a millennia without seeing anyone he knew from then. Regardless of his feelings, he simply tells himself that it's better this way. "I'll gladly show you the library after your bath, so you know how to get there on your own."

"Thank you." He grins and kisses his cheek just to show his gratitude.

"It's my pleasure, little lamb." He then reaches down to cup Will's cheek, just to sweeten his response. Will leans into his touch with a happy sigh, enjoying how warm and gentle everything is right now. Hannibal missed having someone to be this generous and kind to. Galahad was the first person he shared something remotely close to this with. And now, having someone who looks eerily similar to him, it is almost cruel.

"You're thinking too much, I can see it on your face." He mumbles and reaches up to brush his fingertips across his cheekbones. The vampire tenses up briefly at the contact before relaxing into his touch a little, just as much as he will allow himself. "You needn't worry about me, darling boy."

"I'm not. I'm just letting you know," he says with a small chuckle, smiling a little more when Hannibal seems to settle.

With a huffed out laugh, he smiles. "Well, thank you, Will."

"No problem," he murmurs and just looks at his face for a bit, thinking about how pretty he is, how there's almost something familiar about the way his eyes are shaped and how they squint a little when he smiles.

He tilts his head a tad when he notices Will staring at him for a bit longer than what could be considered normal. "Is something the matter?"

"No, you just… you know how some people just look and feel familiar?" He asks and

shrugs, “That’s how you are but I doubt it means anything.”

“I’m sure it doesn’t.” Despite his words, he cannot help the small bit of hope swelling in his chest at that. As silly as it is, he had wished for fate to return Galahad to him. Perhaps it did, at least in some way.

“Is it okay for me to ask what your life was like before?” He’s just curious at this point, Hannibal seems like an interesting person so he would like to know more.

“Of course you can. Though I must warn you, it may be terribly boring,” he jokes with a genuine smile.

“I don’t think it will be.” Will shrugs and smiles back, “How did you end up in the castle? I mean… it’s a bit weird that you’re all alone.”

“Being alone is the price for immortality, Will. As for the castle itself, it was another gift that my sire had given me.”

Will nods and hums a little, “Did you willingly change or was it forced?” Hannibal grimaces, a barely noticeable twitch of his cheeks, as he recalls that fateful day with the Saxons. He thought he was dead, until he wasn’t.

“Forced.” It had to have been. He could not remember asking nor even being present for it.

“Oh… I’m sorry.” He frowns and thinks a moment before grabbing one of Hannibal’s hands and pressing a kiss to his knuckles. He smiles at that gesture.

“Don’t be, little lamb. I no longer mourn that loss.”

“I would be, you lost a whole part of your life.”

“The only part I’m missing is death. But just think of all the experiences I’ve gained in its stead. I quite literally have all the time in the world, darling.”

“I guess that’s true.” He shrugs and thinks for a second then lets himself sink further into the water, “You have to watch the people you care for die while you stay in perfect condition.”

Hannibal sighs and nods. “I do. I’m thankful that I haven't grown too fond of other people once I became this. Those from my past had already moved on with their lives after they assumed I died.”

“That didn’t hurt you?” Will is just honestly shocked that anyone could live that way.

“Of course it did, but I didn’t blame them. I still don’t. They even gave me a proper burial in accordance with our religion. Though, I’m glad it must not have been the most effective method, since my body was intact when I awoke,” he muses with a soft sigh.

“Oh, that’s interesting.”

“It is, isn’t it?” He thinks for a moment about all the uncertainties of that before speaking up again. “But that’s enough about me. How about you? What was the thing you looked forward to most in your life?”

“Well… nothing really. I just kind of always knew how my life was going to go. I enjoyed the few times I was allowed to fish though.”

“And I’m assuming you like to fish, Will?”

“Yeah, as I got older I wasn’t allowed to go as often though.” He shrugs and splashes at the water a little, “My parents didn’t really want me to spend too much time out of the house.”

Nodding, he makes a sound of understanding. He knows why they kept him so sheltered, and he’s sure Will knows, as well. “I see. Well, you’re free to roam the grounds however you’d like, including the nearby forest. Though, I wouldn’t recommend that since the wildlife can be unpredictable.”

“Really?” Will knows he’s smiling so big that he must look stupid, “Thank you. I promise to behave.” Hannibal finds himself wearing a smile of his own while he looks over Will’s expression.

“I know you will, little lamb. I have no reason not to trust you.”

“Well I mean… you just met me so there’s no guarantee that you can trust me.”

He chuckles softly. “How about this: I want to trust you. I’d like to.”

“I’m glad you do.” He just nods in response and, tentatively, he presses a feather light kiss to Will’s head, his nose nestled in those chocolate-hued tresses. Will just stays there, soaking in the attention and how happy he feels. After a moment he presses his head closer to Hannibal’s face.

“I know. You like being treated gently,” Hannibal purrs with a chuckle. He rests his cheek against Will’s temple for a brief moment.

“I don’t try to hide it.” He mumbles and laughs a little, turning his head to kiss his cheek.

“Even if you did, I’d still know.” “Good to know you can read my mind, that’s not scary at all.”

“I do my best to not be intrusive, I assure you,” he says quietly, almost apologetically.

“Can you even control it?” Hannibal shakes his head. He’s tried plenty of times, it’s just never effective.

”I cannot.”

“Then it’s okay, I can’t really be mad at you for something you have no power over.”

“That doesn’t make it any less rude,” he mutters. Will just chuckles and kisses his chin.

“You’re so dramatic.”

He reaches down to splash Will a bit, laughing softly. “I am not.”

Will laughs along and splashes him back, just having fun for the first time in a while. As it would turn out, Hannibal is experiencing his own renewed amusement after spending a rather long while alone. With a soft hum, he presses another kiss to Will’s hair before pulling away. “Now, you’ve had a long evening. Let’s get you back in bed, shall we?”

“Yeah, that sounds great.” He says with a small grin and stretches a little before standing to get out of the tub. Will is then wrapped up in a plush towel by the older man, who does not want Will to catch a cold.

“I’ll arrange for someone to get you some proper clothes, soon.”

“My old ones are okay, they’re comfy.” Will says and holds the towel tight around himself with a happy hum.

“A young man should have more than a few outfits. Or so I’ve been told,” he says with a smile, glad Will looks so at peace.

“Whatever you think is best, Hannibal.”

“Thank you for trusting my judgment, little lamb.”

“Always with the little lamb,” he sort of teases and laughs just a little.

“Because you’re my little lamb, sweet boy,” he teases back before picking him up again to return him to his room. Will just giggles and curls up in his arms. He keeps him cradled to his chest, wondering if his life would’ve been this simple and fulfilling had he returned to Galahad after he first awoke. He sighs and decides not to focus on what could have been, as there is nothing he can do to change the past.

Hannibal gets Will snuggled up under the blankets and furs as soon as they enter the room before turning to leave.

“You can stay if you’d like.” Will mumbles and sits up a little, “I’d be okay with that.”

“Would you like me to stay with you, Will?” he questions with a soft smile.

“Mhm, I would.” He nods and pats the spot next to him. Hannibal carefully floats over to him and toes off his shoes as he climbs onto the bed. He settles into that spot, trying to be as little of a nuisance as possible. Will wastes no time snuggling up to him, pushing himself up under Hannibal’s arm and resting his head on his chest. He blinks down at the younger man,

not entirely sure what to do with himself. He settles for rubbing Will's back soothingly while humming that tune from earlier.

"You really like that song." He mumbles, already half asleep. He's sure if he dug far enough he could remember which dream he'd heard that tune in but he's much too tired for that now.

"It's one of the few vivid things I remember from that time long since passed," he replies in a soft voice.

"It's beautiful." Will whispers while tracing his fingertips over his chest. Hannibal gently takes that hand into his own while locking eyes with him, oceans meeting rubies.

"I'm glad you think so, little lamb."

"It's a very light and soft song." He says through a yawn and nuzzles his chest. Hannibal remembers the night he heard it last. Indeed, it's a beautiful, hopeful tune. Though, the meaning was soured by that fateful turn of events.

"Yes, it is." Will decides to be quiet after that response, feeling like he'd done something wrong since that came out in a sort of dead tone. He hugs his little lamb close, not wanting to think about that, his brothers, or Galahad. He tells himself it is not worth it. Not when they're long gone.

"I'm sorry." Will murmurs and hugs him a little tighter, "I didn't mean to make you feel bitter. It just sounded familiar and nice. Just like everything else about you." That last bit made Hannibal smile a little.

"There's no need to apologize, Will. I promise you it's alright." He just nods and snuggles close, tangling his legs with Hannibal's before going to sleep for the night. Hannibal stays awake, watching over Will and keeping him comfortable through the night. When the sunrise threatens to spill through the cracks in the curtains, he quickly and quietly slips out of Will's arms and pads his way to his own room. With some luck, he'll get a decent bit of sleep.

End of chapter two.

Chapter End Notes

Yes, yes, I know it hasn't been a week yet. I'm much too excited to finish posting this work that I've decided to move to semiweekly, instead of weekly. As always, I hope you enjoyed this chapter and I'll see you next time.

Pandemonium

Chapter Summary

Will explores what Lord Lecter's castle has to offer. Hannibal follows through with his promise...

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

By the time the sun has set again, Hannibal is already back to his usual routine, face half submerged in his opulent bath. Though his mind is plagued with anything but relaxing thoughts. His little tryst with the young man the night before didn't leave him… undisturbed, so to speak. To see that angelic face wrought with pleasure, it is almost too much to bear. Before long, he finds himself uncomfortably hard and wanting. With a sigh, Hannibal sits up in his bath, hand skating down his chest and dipping beneath the perfume-laden water. Deft and elegant fingertips trace the inside of his thigh, almost as if he's debating something.

After ample consideration, he carefully grips himself, a soft groan emanating from his chest as his thumb feels along an engorged vein. Hannibal's hand moves in steady, fluid motions, low moans and grunts tumbling past his lips. He rests the back of his head on the edge of the tub, a small, pleased smile tugging at the corners of his mouth, eyes fluttering shut.

Oh how he wishes to experience pleasure alongside Will, but he tells himself it's better to be patient and wait. The last thing Hannibal wants to do is overwhelm the poor boy or scare him away. Will takes precedence above all else. Will. It is the gratified look on Will's face burned into his mind's eye that drives him over the edge. With a gentle purr, he spills into the now tepid bath water. Hannibal collects his thoughts for a moment before climbing out to dry off and get dressed, draining the tub as he goes. Once he is dressed and presentable, he makes his way to Will's room. Hannibal knocks before entering.

"Are you awake yet, little lamb?"

"Mmf?" Will rolls a little to look at him and smiles sleepily then snuggles back into his pillows. He smiles back at him while moving to sit at the edge of the bed.

"Did you sleep well, sweet boy?" he inquires while brushing a bit of hair from Will's face. "Mhm." He nods and leans into his hand, yawning a little, "Missed you when I woke up though."

With a soft chuckle at how cute the younger man can be, he rubs his fingers through Will's hair. "I'm sorry I wasn't there. I had a few matters to attend to before turning in for the morning."

"Mhm." He hums and presses his head even closer to his hand, "It's okay."

"As promised, I'll be taking you to the stables this evening."

"Let's go then."

"I'm glad to see you're still eager to learn." He stands up and straightens out his clothes. "I'll go prepare the horses. Someone will escort you when the time comes. In the meantime,

feel free to lounge or roam about the castle at your leisure." Hannibal then turns to leave, heading promptly for the stables.

Will nods and decides to search for the library, when he finds it he grabs a book that seems interesting enough and lays down on the floor to relax with his story.

It is a simple tale really. With the way it is written, it can hardly be considered a story at all. It seems to be more akin to a meticulously kept recounting of historic events. Will does not seem to mind, however. His curious mind and love of these stories of valiance trumps whichever way it is presented. He spends hours reading, zoned out and in another world. He notices how the author focuses a lot on a certain knight, Galahad, and wonders if they may have had a favorite. Before Will can get much further in the book, a servant had come to collect him, as previously mentioned by Hannibal.

Hannibal, on the other hand, is taking a few laps around the grand field close to the stables on his favored horse, a selle français he so lovingly named Lancelot. He certainly hopes Will doesn't ask why, for he does not wish to divulge that much of his past so soon. His posture is stoic and serious, but there is a sort of tranquility about him, for he is always at peace when working with his animals.

Will is practically bouncing the whole way there, still excited from reading and only getting even more excited when he realizes he's finally getting to ride a horse. Once in the stables, he gets help saddling and mounting a big palomino draft horse he decided to name Gawain because of the story he has been reading. When Hannibal notices Will's presence, he slows to a stop from his galloping and smiles at him.

"Hello, Will."

"Hi!" He knows he's being loud and probably has the biggest grin on his face right now. He smiles mirthfully at Will and his unbridled joy. It is not the first time he's seen that grin. It was always when Galahad had bested him at something. He would be practically beaming with pride.

"I see you've already gotten used to the basics. Seems as though you have a knack for this."

"I guess I'm so excited I'm learning fast." He says simply and shrugs while guiding his horse to walk beside Hannibal's.

"Still. You have the posture of a well-seasoned rider."

"You don't have to lie to me." He says and laughs a little.

"I'm not," he responds with his own chuckle. "I've been riding horses for centuries. I think I have enough experience to make that sort of observation."

"Alright then, I trust you." He nods and pats his horse's neck, "Did he have a name before? Because if not I've decided on one." Hannibal tilts his head a little.

"Oh really? And what did you pick?"

"Gawain. One of the knights from a story I started reading. He seems like a cool, strong guy, just like him." Will smiles and gestures to his horse.

Hannibal, on the other hand, is not so jovial. Though, he does his best to not show it. "And which story was that?" he asks softly.

"Tales of the Roundtable." He shrugs, "I like knights."

"I see," he mutters while fidgeting a bit. He does not want Will to know any of what he had written actually happened, nor that he wrote it at all. Not yet, anyway. He fears would be a lot for him to process. Hannibal would much rather have Will hear everything from him, piece by piece, instead.

Will looks at his hands for a second, biting his lip, "I know it's a little childish but I thought it would be cool."

“I think it’s a perfect name, Will.” He looks over at him with a reassuring smile. Will smiles back and laughs a little.

“Thank you.”

“Of course, little lamb. Now, why don’t we take a short ride elsewhere? There’s a path I like to frequent that passes by a lake.”

“That sounds amazing.” He nods in agreement and starts veering off in that direction, murmuring soft praises to Lancelot. He thinks all animals that work so hard for you deserve to know when they are doing well. Will decides to ride quietly, just enjoying how pretty everything is, while Hannibal studies him. He is just wondering how it is possible for someone to look the exact same as someone else from the past.

‘Maybe I’m losing my grasp on reality,’ he thinks with a little laugh.

“I used to only dream about this, I’m glad you made it real.” Will says, smiling warmly at Hannibal, who is caught a little off guard by the random bit of gratitude.

“It was my pleasure, little lamb,” he replies while returning the smile.

“It’s just really exciting. I didn’t expect my executioner to give me a nice bed and take me trail riding.” He frowns a little.

“I’m not your executioner, Will.”

“Well, you kind of are. I’m technically here to be killed, eventually.”

He finds that idea to honestly be a little hurtful. ‘Is that what they all think of me?’ With a huff, Hannibal trots Lancelot ahead and stops him in front of Will’s sturdy Gawain, eyes narrowed.

“That’s what they raised you to believe. I gave the passed sacrifices the same deal I gave you and they took advantage of it. That’s why they met their end. It wasn’t for pleasure nor on any whim. I’m not cruel by any means, sweet boy. Remember that.”

Will just stares for a moment then nods, “I will.” He moves to walk past Hannibal, “I’d never take advantage of you or your gifts.”

“I would certainly hope not,” he mutters while trailing behind him. Will smiles a little to himself and taps Gawain’s ribs to make him trot. Will had never rode a horse but for some reason he felt very confident about it. And Hannibal can see that. It is evident in Will’s posture just how naturally inclined to this he is. His heart sinks when he has to remind himself that Galahad is dead and riding beside him.

“I think I may be able to speed up but I don’t wanna fall.” Will says after slowing down just a bit.

“I’m sure you’ll be able to. You just have to put your trust in Gawain,” which is a foreign thing to say now after so much time has passed. Will nods and takes a deep breath then urges him into a lope, feeling comfortable with just laying back and letting his body move whichever way it needs to. Hannibal watches with delight, feeling oddly proud of him. Will looks even more like Galahad, totally in his element. Growing misty eyed at the realization, Hannibal dabs at the crimson fluid that threatens to drip past his lashes with his handkerchief. Confident that he looks normal again, he speeds up to close the distance between them. Will is smiling big and laughing a little, this is probably the happiest he’s been since he was a kid. After a minute he looks over at Hannibal and smirks then taps Gawain into a gallop.

“Race me!” He yells over his shoulder, knowing Hannibal will probably win. That elicits a laugh from the older man, who then coaxes Lancelot to pick up the pace. The more time he spends with Will, the more similarities between him and Galahad shine through. Will is just grinning and doing his best to stay ahead of Hannibal, being risky a few times and trying to push him off the trail a little. That forces another laugh to rumble through his chest, who is enjoying this far too much. He does not play dirty like Will, however. He would rather not

risk injuring him.

When they finally reach the lake Will slows his horse to a walk and smiles over at Hannibal, “This the spot?”

With a nod, he responds, “It is. What do you think?”

“It’s really pretty, nice and peaceful.” He dismounts and leads Gawain by the reins, wanting to get closer to the water. Hannibal follows suit, just desiring to be close to Will.

“I’m glad you think so. This is one of my favorite places to go, especially to think.”

“Seems like.” He says and sits down, making sure to keep a hold on Gawain. Hannibal takes a seat next to him on the grass.

“There’s no expectations in nature. That’s the beauty of it. And I enjoy the quiet. It feels like home, in a way.”

“We all come from the earth, that’s why it feels like home.” He says and smiles.

“Yes. That’s exactly it,” he responds with his own smile before relaxing and just taking in his surroundings. To him, it’s rather nice to share this with someone. Will leans into his side a little and turns his head to kiss his shoulder.

“You’re rather affectionate this evening,” he mentions with a soft hum.

“I’m just happy.” He says and moves away just a little, much to Hannibal’s secret chagrin.

“I’m glad you are.” He then carefully reaches to hold Will’s free hand, honestly not sure if he would be alright with that. Will just squeezes his back and stares out at the lake. They sit like that for a while, just admiring the scenery that’s bathed in pale moonlight.

“Wanna swim?”

“I don’t see why we couldn’t,” he says while standing up and hitching Lancelot to a sturdy tree. Will does the same and goes behind some bushes to undress. Hannibal undresses out in the open, far too old to really be bothered by something like that. Once has stripped, he slowly walks into the lake, stopping at about waist height. Will makes sure to stay covered until the water is up to his hips and even then he stays a little further from Hannibal, who glances at Will with a smile.

“Is everything alright?”

“Yeah, just not used to being naked around people I guess.”

“You get used to it eventually. Though, that took me centuries,” he says with a little laugh in an attempt to get Will to relax a bit. Will nods and cups some water into his hand to wash his face then stretches big. Hannibal tries not to reminisce so much about days gone by, despite this being similar to when he and Galahad would stop to bathe in a river, or other body of water. After a minute, Will walks out to shoulder level and dunks his head under, getting his hair wet and shaking the water out of it a little when he comes back up. Hannibal is admiring Will once more, thinking about how lovely he looks with the moonlight catching the water droplets on his smooth skin.

Will looks over his shoulder and grins, “Too scared to come out here with me?”

He chuckles and wades out to where Will is. “No, no. I just thought you might’ve wanted a little privacy.”

“Well I’m pretty much covered all the way right now so it’s not a big deal.”

“If you insist,” he replies. With a soft hum and tilts his head up to gaze at the moon and stars. While he missed the warmth of the sun, the night sky had always been the next best thing. Will watches for a minute then does the same, smiling just a little while he looks over the stars and picks out the brightest ones for no reason other than he enjoys them.

“It’s a beautiful evening.”

“It is,” Will agrees with a nod. “We should do this again.”

Hannibal smiles and nods in agreement before taking his hand. He caresses Will’s knuckles

gently before pressing a kiss to them. “I’d be honored to.”

Will blushes and just looks at him for a moment before kissing Hannibal’s hand back. “That’s good to know.”

Hannibal is caught a little off guard by Will’s actions, but they cannot deny the giddy sensation that it makes him feel. He just responds with a nod, smiling softly. Will thinks for a second then takes a deep breath and moves to stand closer to him, deciding that it’s okay to be close as long as he’s covered. Hannibal welcomes the change in proximity, since it gives him the chance to study Will’s features in this lighting. He’s absolutely breathtaking, well, he would be if Hannibal had any.

“You’re staring.” He mumbles after a minute or two and glances at Hannibal, who quickly tears his gaze away from the little lamb.

“My sincerest apologies. You just look so much like someone I once knew.”

“Oh? Who?” Will tilts his head a little, actually curious.

“Gal…” Hannibal trails off the name before smiling and shaking his head. “It’s not important, little lamb.” He does not want Will to hear about him. Not yet. Galahad. In fact, Hannibal is not sure if he is even ready, himself, to discuss him.

“Oh, okay.” He does his best to not sound disappointed but cannot help when he frowns a little, feeling like he is being left out on knowing some secret.

“Perhaps I’ll tell you someday, if the need arises.” Perhaps it might, though Hannibal would not know that. Some small part of him secretly hopes it will. He does not want to keep Will in the dark forever. ‘It’s not fair to him,’ he thinks. Will’s satisfied with that answer so he just goes back to looking up at the stars and moon. Perhaps outside of his better judgment, Hannibal moves closer and pulls Will into his arms. He hopes, for just the briefest of moments, that Will, at least in some way, is Galahad in the flesh. To have a companion, one who truly knew him as he was, would slice through the ever-growing loneliness that threatens to overtake him.

Will makes a small, surprised sound but does not pull away. He does the opposite, actually. He just presses himself against Hannibal and closes his eyes while letting himself relax. This feels familiar to him, the way their bodies fit together almost perfectly. How Hannibal’s breath feels hot against his neck and the back of his ear. The cool, big arms that wrap around him and keep him warm despite the chilly water and slight breeze. Even the way Hannibal smells is familiar and makes his heart feel warm. He subconsciously traces little shapes with his fingertips over the back of the older man’s hands while he hums softly and continues to stargaze.

“I’m sorry,” he murmurs without making a move to pull away, pressing his face to his shoulder. “I don’t know what came over me.”

“It’s okay.” Will says, smiling a little, “This is nice.”

Hannibal just nods in response, too lost in thought to really answer. He and Galahad had shared very few moments together, and even fewer intimate ones. The ones they did experience, however, were just like this: somewhere secluded and wrapped up in each other’s arms. And Hannibal missed this dearly. He knows Will is not Galahad and, even if he is a reincarnation of him, never will be. Regardless, he lets himself hope. Will completely relaxes against him and hugs him close, his head resting against his shoulder. They stay like that for a while, longer than a normal embrace would typically last. When Hannibal does finally pull away, he does so without another word. Will frowns just a little and rubs his own arms.

“Guess the moment’s over, huh?”

“My apologies, but it was a lapse in judgment,” which isn’t exactly a lie, despite not actually wanting to leave his arms. He just didn’t want his feelings for a lost love to

inconvenience Will. He doesn't think it'd be fair to him.

"Oh." Will mumbles while frowning, "Okay." He feels terrible after hearing that so he starts moving out of the water, going back to his clothes to get dressed while thinking about what he could have done differently. When Hannibal can see how that affected Will, he feels absolutely awful. As he wades out of the water to redress, he decides to find a way to make it up to Will.

Will wastes no time mounting Gawain and turning him towards home, just wanting to lay in bed and read. He really thought he was going to be able to have something, but Hannibal calling it a 'lapse in judgment' pulled him out of his happy little mind palace and reminded him of why he came here in the first place.

Back to being presentable, Hannibal climbs onto Lancelot's back and follows Will back home. He does not even know why he said that when he did not truly mean it, not in the way it clearly came across. He's deep in thought as he slowly trots behind Will. He has no issues with being close to him, and it is not like he doesn't trust Will.

"Maybe I'm afraid of getting too close," he mumbles to himself with a scoff.

Will decides to gallop the rest of the way home since there obviously is not going to be any more conversation. This catches Hannibal off guard and, given Will's reaction to his previous statement, he gets the feeling that he does not want to speak with him. So, Hannibal maintains his current speed for the rest of the way back. When he reaches the stables, he dismounts and gets Lancelot fed and watered before making his way back to the castle, still under the assumption Will does not wish to speak with him.

Will is curled up in bed with his book. He had always liked escaping into fairytales as a kid and that is exactly what he is doing now. Right now he's a knight of the roundtable, exploring with his brothers in arms.

Hannibal once again makes the assumption that Will does not want to see him and, despite wanting to check on him, goes about his evening routine. After all, he needs that bit of wine in his system to ignore the thoughts running around his head. Before long, dawn approaches and Hannibal retires to his room for the morning.

Will does not sleep at all. He stays in his bed and ignores the world around him. Hannibal, himself, does not sleep a wink either. He was too busy thinking about Galahad. And how, even when storming off, Will is almost exactly like him. He did not think it was fair, at all. 'Why must God torment me so?" He asked himself that the whole morning. Will had fallen asleep by then and snores softly with his cheek resting on the last page he had read.

Come nightfall, Hannibal ended up pacing around the castle for what must have been hours, trying to will his mind to a tiredness that never came. He knows he must look rough, but he honestly could not care less. So, he settles for a quick bath and gets dressed for the evening, deciding to pay Will a visit.

Will had gotten up to sit by the fire and continue his reading. By now he's almost finished with it and kind of sad that it's ending. Hannibal knocks on the door, not wanting to intrude. "Will? May I come in?"

"Sure," he says and sighs while closing his book.

Hannibal carefully and quietly opens the door before shutting it behind him not wanting to disturb him. "What are you reading?" he asks inquisitively.

"Still the same book." He mumbles, not even looking at him.

"I see." He lets out a little sigh before speaking again. "So, what do you think of it?"

"It's nice, Tristan is my favorite."

Hannibal feels a sort of swell of pride in his chest, and a bit of melancholy, at that statement. He wonders how Will would feel if he knew that the vampire standing before him

was that same man in the ‘story’.

“Oh? Any particular reason as to why?”

“He doesn’t have to tell anyone how good he is, they just know.” Will shrugs, “And he obviously cares for everyone but doesn’t really say it, he shows them through his actions.”

“They could certainly always rely on him,” he states while sitting across from Will on the edge of his bed, trying to figure out what to say next.

“What you said hurt me. I don’t know why, but it did.” He says softly and swallows, scared that speaking his mind is going to be what ends him. Hannibal stays silent for a moment, trying to figure out the right phrasing.

“I know it did, Will, and I’ve regretted it ever since it left my mouth. I… I’m sorry.”

“I accept your apology.” He says simply and leans back in his chair to continue reading. The curt response leaves Hannibal’s chest feeling tight. So, he decides not to overstay his welcome and gets up to leave. Will sighs when the door shuts and gets up to follow after him.

“You know, it’s not very brave of you to just walk out like that, makes it seem like you were just apologizing to stay on my good side.”

Hannibal stops in his tracks, but doesn’t turn around. “I’m not as brave as I used to be, Will. I apologized so I don’t seem like a fool with the emotional awareness of a teacup. And then I left because I get the feeling that you’d rather not have me around.”

“The last thing I want to do is be alone.” Will says firmly, “I’m sorry you felt otherwise.”

He finally faces the little lamb. “Don’t be. You have every right to be upset with me.”

“I was still out of line running off just because of that, I got too comfortable.” Hannibal shakes his head.

“You didn’t. I didn’t treat you how you deserve to be. I say you reacted appropriately.”

“If you think so.” He shrugs and hugs his book to his chest, “Are there more of these?”

He nods in response. “There should be a few more in the library. You may keep them all in your room, if you’d like. I have no use for them.”

“Thank you, I like reading about them.” He smiles a little, “Galahad and I are a lot alike, I think.”

Hannibal stiffens a little and swallows, not able to deny that fact. “You’re right about that.”

“He was pretty much raised into being a knight, he never really had much of his own life. I guess it’s just nice to have someone to relate to.”

“I’m sure it is,” he says with a soft smile. Hannibal continues walking, but, this time, to the library. He is now intent on collecting all of those books for him, secretly wanting Will to learn everything about them, especially himself during his days as Tristan.

“How were you even able to get these? I mean, the originals have to be… very old.”

He hums before speaking. “The books were well cared for,” Hannibal says as though he wasn’t the one to have written that series and watched over these books for the last millennia, give or take a few centuries.

“I’m glad you’re willing to lend them to me.”

“It’s my pleasure, little lamb. I would love for these old books to finally get some attention.” Hannibal smiles a little at the thought of someone learning his history, especially one so similar to Galahad.

“Who’s your favorite?” He asks, just curious and wanting to know.

“Galahad.” Hannibal winces a little when that answer comes too quickly, hoping Will doesn’t mention anything about that. Unfortunately for Hannibal, he just laughs and smiles a little.

“I guess that explains why you’re so fond of me.”

“Just because you and him are rather similar, doesn’t make you the same person. I’m

attracted to you for various reasons outside of that."

"I would've been a brave knight like him." He says almost dreamily, "Riding across plains and mountain passes with my brothers, my friends. It would be so fun. I guess it's good enough that I get to do so in my sleep though." That elicits a head tilt from the vampire.

"You dream of such things?" he inquires softly. "Those who've experienced it wouldn't necessarily share the same sentiments as you do."

"I mean, it would be scary. And rough. But I think at the end of the day it would be worth it."

"You have a noble heart, little lamb. I hope, if nothing else, that part of you will always remain." Will blushes at that, feeling like he had just been given the complement of a lifetime and not really knowing how to respond. He hums softly at Will's reaction.

"Is something the matter, sweet boy?"

"That was a really nice compliment." Will says softly and bites his lip.

"I didn't say it to please you," he says with a little hum.

"I know, it was just nice."

"I'll be sure to give you more compliments, then." They walk for a little while longer before reaching the library. Hannibal starts speaking again while helping Will get those books, "So, why Tristan, if you don't mind my asking? Most would prefer Arthur, Lancelot, or even Bors, depending on their own character."

"I don't know, he's just got this odd charm about him." Will shrugs and starts looking over all the other books. Hannibal cannot help feeling at least a little special at the notion of being preferred out of all the rest. He was always the quiet ranger and not drawing attention to himself was literally a crucial part of his survival. Though, an unintended consequence of that was hardly being noticed at all. The only one who ever did, and was allowed to, was Galahad. Perhaps that is why it is so easy to be open with Will, to let him see him as he is.

"Why is Galahad your favorite? It's only fair that you give me your reason since I gave you mine."

"I…" Hannibal goes silent for a moment while recollecting why exactly he fell for that skirt-clad snark. It makes him smile, even if it's bitter sweetly, "He was always so genuine and full of life. Everything he did, he did for the greater good, never for himself. Years ago, I wanted to be like him. You could say I even hoped to be." Will thinks for a second then hums.

"You speak as if you used to know him."

"You could say that," Hannibal mutters, almost wistfully.

"…Were you a knight?" He is just curious at this point, figuring that if Hannibal knew Galahad he must've been. He sighs. The metaphorical cat is out of the proverbial bag now.

"I was, at least in the broad sense of the word."

"What did you do?" He sounds like a child who has just met their hero as he gives all his attention to Hannibal, who hums while trying to think up of a way to tell Will the truth without fully exposing his identity.

"Like the knights in your stories, I had been sent off to serve in an age-long war that wasn't even my own. Though, I never complained. I never said much, now that I can recall. Regardless, I trained as much as I could and found I had a talent for tracking, which wasn't uncommon in boys like me, whose villages relied on hunting more than farming."

"You sound a lot like Tristan." He says and smiles brightly.

"I suppose I do," he replies with a soft chuckle. He tells himself not to worry, for 'sounding like' is not the same as 'you are'. Will nods in agreement and hums while finding a place to settle down and continue reading.

Hannibal traverses the library, looking for something he had not yet read, or, at least, had not read more than fifty times. He eventually settles for a random medical book, mostly wanting to return to where Will is rather than simply reading. When he gets back Will moves to be closer and even rests against his side, just wanting the comfort of having another person with him. This makes Hannibal smile, feeling the most relaxed he has in a long while.

Flipping through the pages, he finds himself growing accustomed to having his little lamb by his side. He knows he is growing far too attached already, but he is feeling rather daring. Will is back in his mind palace, riding along with Tristan and the rest of the knights, the more he reads the more he notices just how similar he is to Galahad. Even with looks they're almost identical. It's a bit weird but it makes him happy in a way.

Immersed in his own book, he stays nestled next to Will, the morning without sleep slowly but surely taking its toll. Before long, Hannibal has dozed off with the book in his lap, his cheek resting on Will's shoulder. This is poor decision making, but he is just too comfortable to care. Once he has finished, Will huffs and smiles, gently laying Hannibal down before grabbing another book to read while laying beside him, practically pressed to his side.

Hannibal wakes a few hours later and he's just a little embarrassed about falling asleep. He sits up with a soft whine, rubbing the sleep from his eyes.

"Oh goodness, I'm sorry, little lamb," he apologizes while huffing out a chuckle.

Will looks up at him and smiles warmly, "It's okay, you can lay back down if you want. I was enjoying the company."

Hannibal bites his lip a little while mulling over his options, eventually deciding that it would be alright to. So, he lays down, relaxing into the plush surface next to Will who smiles and goes back to his book, scooting over just a little to be closer to him like before.

'This is nice,' the vampire muses to himself. It has been ages since he was given such affection, even if it is only a simple gesture. He finds himself leaning into Will's presence, bit by bit. Will grins at that and hums softly, curling up a little to get more comfortable.

"Enjoying your 'story'?" he inquires.

"Mhm, this one's more focused on Galahad. I guess whoever wrote these had a thing for him."

Hannibal finds himself chuckling softly at that. 'If only you knew,' he quips to himself. "He certainly did."

"I wish someone would write about me that way," he mumbles, just thinking out loud. Oddly enough, the thought of doing that for Will brings him joy. His only issue is that he does not know if he could do him justice.

"Perhaps I will someday, if I can become acquainted with you well enough."

"Really?" He blushes and smiles over at him, "I'd appreciate that."

"I'd be honored too, little lamb," he replies, smiling back at him. Will huffs playfully and goes back to his book, thinking about how sweet it would be to have a whole book dedicated to him. Hannibal just relaxes and enjoys the evening with him, occasionally stealing glances at what Will is reading.

When he gets to the end of the book Will just stares for a moment at the sketch of what Galahad supposedly looked like. He cannot deny that he looks almost identical to himself, just a little rough around the edges. Will reads over the random notes scribbled in about the man. They are all little phrases like: 'An unrestrained fervor in those eyes' or 'His lashes flutter like the wings of a butterfly.' Small notes with no real meaning separately, but they painted a picture of love and adoration when all pieced together. Will keeps staring then swallows and sort of gently runs his thumb across the page, "I look like him." Now he is thinking in overdrive. While he does dream of the knights, he has never seen nor spoke to

Galahad.

"Is something the matter, Will?" he asks before getting a good look at the page Will is lingering on. When he does, Hannibal freezes, not expecting Will to have read every one of these books so quickly. Will looks over at him with wide eyes and tilts his head a little, confused and a little worried.

Hannibal does not even know where to begin. Not without completely revealing his past. He has a decision to make. After a moment that feels like an eternity, he finally opens his mouth to speak.

"I…"

End of chapter three.

Chapter End Notes

Hannibal is no stranger to "self care" ;) See you all again next Wednesday!

Inferno

Chapter Summary

Will's mind is on fire trying to figure out the creature he's doomed to live with. Hannibal tries his best to be honest. Soon, crisp autumn turns to a bitter winter...

Hannibal has intimacy issues.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Hannibal is choking on his words and he cannot comprehend why. He does not understand why he refuses to tell Will the truth. Will stares at him and back at the sketch then back to him, "Why can't you speak?"

"I… The resemblance is indeed uncanny." He swallows thickly, fiddling with the hem of his vest. "Will, how would you feel if I told you I hadn't been completely honest? About my past?"

"I would… understand." He says softly and sets the book down, resting his hands in his own lap. With a sigh, Hannibal nods in response.

"I will answer any and all questions you have fully and honestly."

Will thinks for a second while looking over before asking, "Who wrote the books?"

"I did," he says simply. It is the truth, though he is leaving out the part about Tristan and himself being one and the same.

"Who were you?" His eyes narrow a little, hoping that if Hannibal lies to him he can catch it.

"I…" He hates that he has basically been questioned into a corner. With a sigh, he answers, "I've gone by many names throughout the ages, little lamb. But in that brief moment of history, I was Tristan."

Will sits there for a good long while and just stares at him, thinking and trying to shut his brain up, "Tristan?"

He nods. "Yes."

"So… you… you're in my dreams. What does that mean?" That elicits a head tilt from Hannibal.

"You've dreamed about the people in those books before?"

"Yeah, before I even read them. I just thought it was my brain making friends."

"Would you mind telling me more about them?"

"Well it's… just like the books. Except I never dreamed of Galahad. Tris- you were there."

"Did you know it was me?"

"I don't know. I mean, you have similarities but you seemed to be a bit of a show off while Tristan was anything but that."

"I suppose immortality has taken its toll," he muses.

"I guess it has." He agrees and hums a little while thinking, "Why would you be in my

dreams along with everyone else but not Galahad?" Hannibal hums thoughtfully.

"I'm not sure," Hannibal replies truthfully. Will huffs and lays back down, feeling a little overwhelmed. Is it possible that his dreams were not dreams, but rather memories?

"Perhaps if you recall what happened, I might be able to shed some light onto what it means."

"Well… I don't remember much other than singing and laughing from one of my dreams. I knew by the end that something was wrong though. My brain felt fuzzy so I didn't really understand how serious the situation was. Then there was another where we were on this like… big frozen lake. And we were fighting some people who looked like they hadn't ever bathed." Hannibal stays silent for a moment. He knows exactly which events Will was recounting, one of which he'd love nothing more than to forget.

"That first one. We were supposed to be going home after fifteen years of service to the Roman army, just for Arthur to inform us that we only could after one last harrowing mission."

"That's not fair," he mumbles and looks at his hands.

"You're right, it wasn't. But none of us were afraid of getting our hands dirty. We only wanted to finally be free. So, we all agreed." He sighs and briefly hums that tune again, recollecting everything that happened during their drunken revelry. Will frowns and hugs his knees to his chest.

"Why do I know all of these things?"

"I don't know, little lamb. I wish I knew the answer."

"I mean… it wouldn't make sense for me to be able to accurately describe things I've never been through or even told about."

"You're right, it wouldn't." Biting his lip, he pushes down the ever-growing hope in his chest. Could Will really be Galahad reincarnated? It sounds silly, but given the existence of vampirism, Hannibal wasn't going to completely scrap that notion.

After his brain starts to hurt, Will just snuggles up to Hannibal's side and closes his eyes. He stares down at Will for a moment before hugging him closer, rubbing his arm a little.

"Are you alright, little lamb?"

"I'm okay, just… confused. And worried." He frowns and moves to curl up in his lap. Sighing, he brushes a bit of hair from Will's face.

"There's nothing for you to worry about, sweet boy. I promise." Will nods a little and hides his face in his neck. Hannibal tentatively wraps his arms around Will's waist, wanting to be near him without smothering him.

"You can hold me, I won't break," he tries to joke. Hannibal nods and hugs Will closer, burying his face in the crook of his neck. In this position, he can even smell the similarities between Will and Galahad, for their overall scent is the same. If he closes his eyes, Hannibal could almost imagine it's him. The longer he thinks about it, or perhaps the longer he does not think at all, the less tethered to reality this feels. In this moment, even briefly, Will is Galahad.

"Please don't leave me, Galahad. Not again," he mumbles, not even registering the phrase slipping past his lips. Will tenses and blinks a little, trying to figure out how that made him feel.

"I… won't." He mumbles and pets Hannibal's hair. He nods and pulls Will impossibly close, face still pressed to the supple column that is his neck. Will lets him do whatever he needs, hoping that they will get this all sorted out soon. After a while, Hannibal loosens his hold on the smaller man.

"Apologies. I know I likely overstepped a few boundaries embracing you for so long."

Will just shakes his head and gets close again, wanting to be held.

"It's okay." He nods and pulls his arms around him tighter, for Hannibal laments the idea of letting him go, too. Will shifts around so they can lay down and be more comfortable.

"Can we sleep here? My brain is too loud to do much else." Hannibal nods again.

"Of course, little lamb," he answers while nestling his face against Will's collarbone. Will nods and wraps his legs around Hannibal's then proceeds to drift off into a deep sleep. He stays up a little while longer, admiring Will's sleeping visage, which looks so relaxed and at peace. Hannibal wonders how someone could be so effortlessly beautiful. 'Perhaps it's his purity,' he thinks to himself as he succumbs to his own deeply rooted fatigue.

Will tosses and turns all night, this time he does not dream of adventures or drinking with his brothers, this time it is heavy and sad and full of death. He cannot process most of it but he knows this is bad. Having always been a light sleeper, Hannibal wakes up when Will's erratic movements finally disturb his slumber. It takes him a moment to fully register that Will is having something akin to a night terror. He untangles himself from Will to sit up and console him.

"Hush, little lamb. It's alright," he whispers sweetly while brushing some sweat-curled hair from his face, not wanting to startle him awake. Will shakes his head, mumbling things like 'no' and 'not real'. Eventually, he just jolts awake, shaking and shuddering while hugging himself. Hannibal pulls Will into his strong arms again, rubbing his back and whispering sweet nothings to him.

"It's alright. It was just a bad dream, sweet boy." Will shakes his head and hugs him tight. He saw too much death for one 'dream'. He had to lay to rest two of his brothers, one of them being Tristan.

"You needn't worry about it any longer, Will. I promise you, it's alright." Hannibal knows that, assuming Will's dreams are truly his memories of his life as Galahad, there are very few events that could have earned such a response from him: the final battle against the Saxon hoard.

"W-was too real." He whimpers and tries to make himself even smaller.

"I know, little lamb," he murmurs while smoothing Will's hair back. "But none of what happened in your dream can hurt you. You have my word." Will nods and clings to him, swallowing a little to hopefully calm himself down. "Is there anything I can do to help you?" he asks gently.

"I'm hungry," he answers softly and hides his face in Hannibal's throat, who chuckles at the response.

"Alright. I'll gladly make something for you. Any requests?"

"Apple pie." He wants comfort food right now, something that is sweet and warm and helps him cheer up. Hannibal nods in response.

"I can certainly do that. I'll get you settled in your room and then start on that."

"I don't want to be alone right now." Will mumbles and swallows. That garners Will a hum from the vampire before he responds.

"Then I suppose I have no choice but to enjoy your company in the kitchens," he says with a small smile. Will nods but stays snuggled up, not ready to move after seeing what he had. Hannibal does not move either and actually pulls him onto his lap, since he is assuming Will wants nothing more than to just be close right now.

"How're you still here if we burned your body?" Will asks after a minute, curling up in Hannibal's lap, who shrugs.

"I've always assumed it had to do with it not being the most effective practice. However, I'm not entirely sure, since I wasn't conscious for the entirety of it."

“Did it hurt when you came back?” He pulls away just a little to see his face, only now noticing all the similarities he and Tristan share. Hannibal looks into Will’s eyes and smiles a bit, happy he has someone to tell his tales to.

“In and of itself, no. It did not. I remember feeling a sort of indescribable numbness and a terrible thirst, one that felt almost insatiable.” Will nods and gently brushes his fingertips across his cheek.

“Why didn’t you go back to everyone?”

“It took me a long time to fully grasp what I was. And even longer to accept it. I knew I could never go back to them as I was. I only saw myself as dangerous. Unpredictable.”

“Galahad missed you,” he whispers, not really sure if he and Galahad are different people anymore. Hannibal finds himself fighting back tears at that. Even if he knows that neither of them can be one-hundred percent sure of that, it still pained his lifeless heart to know that the one he yearned for all these years may have felt the same way.

“I missed him, too. Dearly.” After a minute, Will takes a deep breath while letting his head rest on Hannibal’s shoulder.

“Could my dreams be memories?”

“I’m not sure, little lamb, but I wouldn’t exactly discard that theory yet.”

“If I am him… what does that mean? Will anything change?”

“I don’t think you’d be him exactly, though you’d theoretically be a reincarnation of him. I don’t…” he trails off to think for a moment before speaking again. “I don’t think anything would change. Not significantly.” Will nods and sighs softly.

“I guess being a natural at riding horses despite never being on one kind of has an explanation now. If the theory is right.”

“It certainly does.” Hannibal cannot help his hope growing exponentially now. If Galahad was alive, just in a different form, it would mean that he has another chance. Another opportunity to express his feelings.

“It’s weird thinking about that now.” Will hums and shrugs a little.

“You think so, hmm?”

“Mhm, learning that you’re possibly the reincarnation of a great knight is a bit weird.”

“More odd than finding out you’re doomed to live with an immortal being, who used to be a great knight, for the rest of your days?” he asks jokingly, a slightly amused expression on his face. Will laughs and shakes his head a little.

“Maybe a little less weird than that.”

“I suspected as much,” he responds with a chuckle.

“It’s all just weird.”

“I’m sure it’s quite the adjustment. I hope it isn’t too much trouble for you.”

“It’s not.” He shakes his head and moves a bit, “Ready to go cook?”

Hannibal nods and scoops Will up bridal-style, standing upright as he does so. He then starts making his way out of the library and towards the kitchens. He can almost feel daybreak approaching outside, the chiming of the grandfather clock in his sitting room confirming his suspicions. Will smiles and curls up against his chest, just happy to be close. When they finally make it to their destination, Hannibal sets Will down on a stool before clearing off a work space. He then opens a cabinet to reach for a recipe book.

“Are you comfortable, Will?” he inquires while rolling up his sleeves, now focused on his new task. Will watches with a light blush then nods.

“Can I help?”

The vampire smiles and nods. “Of course, little lamb. How confident are you with a knife?”

“I’m okay with one, I used to help mama cook,” he replies and gets to his feet, rolling his own sleeves up. Hannibal finds the image of Will helping the mysterious woman adorable.

“Alright, then,” he says with a chuckle. He tosses up an apple and catches it with the blade of the knife, just to be a bit of a show off.

“I peel and you cut?”

“Sure.” He laughs a little at how that managed to be attractive yet goofy then grabs his own knife. Hannibal dislodges that apple from the knife and gets to work on peeling it, being careful of his cold skin meeting the even colder edge of the metal. Sure, he would heal in an instant, but it would not feel nice, regardless. Once that one is peeled, he passes it to Will and moves onto the next one. Will makes sure to make clean and even cuts, taking the seeds out of the core along the way. And that’s how the process goes for the next few apples: peel, pass, cut. Quick, simple, and efficient.

“You’re doing an excellent job, Will. Most people struggle to keep everything a uniform size.”

“My mom was pretty strict when cooking.” He smiles and glances at Hannibal, causing the knife to slip and slash across the tip of a few of his fingers. Hannibal immediately stops what he’s doing and takes Will’s hand in his own to inspect the damage, swallowing thickly at the scent of fresh blood wafting through the air. Without thinking, he presses a kiss to the cuts, licking his lips after to savor that absolutely divine little treat. Will blushes and watches him a moment then presses his fingers back to his lips, “Take what you want.”

He shivers at that and lets his lips part slightly, his deft tongue working slowly, languidly, over Will’s fingers. Crimson eyes falling shut, he takes those digits into his mouth with a soft hum. Will just watches, his face bright red. Before long, Will is trapped between the counter and the taller man, who is still tasting the cuts on his fingertips, lips painted with a sanguine rouge.

Will tangles his fingers in his hair and groans softly while just watching him. Hannibal always looks so pretty and put together but seeing him like this is making him feel some odd way. Hannibal eventually pulls the fingers from his mouth just to better admire Will’s flushed face. He then cups the younger man’s cheek, brushing his thumb against his lower lip. He cannot help smiling at his expression, finding Will falling apart at the seams from the simplest of touches to be almost rapturing. Will makes a choked sort of sound and kisses the pad of his thumb, lapping at it a bit. Hannibal grunts at that and nestles his face into Will’s neck, gently nipping at his warm flesh as he listens to the rushing blood beneath the skin. Will shudders and stretches his neck out to give him room, swallowing a little.

“Mm sweet boy,” he mutters surprisingly breathlessly. Hannibal lets his fangs prick at his skin, not enough to draw blood, just enough to leave raised abrasions. Despite the usual desire to keep up appearances, the vampire finds himself kneeling before Will.

“Wh-what are you doing?”

“Treating you well, little lamb,” He responds while nosing at one of his soft thighs. He smooths a hand up the other leg, letting it rest gently on his groin. Will whimpers and presses against his touch, gasping softly. Hannibal smirks at that and rubs him gently. For now, the pie-making ingredients have been forgotten. The vampire’s sole concern at this moment is pleasuring his companion. Will lets his head fall back while letting out a moan, hoping he does not look like a fool. Satisfied with that reaction, Hannibal swiftly undoes the buttons of Will’s trousers. He looks upwards at his mousey little lamb as he gets them and his underwear pulled down a bit. Will feels weak in the knees and licks his lips, watching him carefully. Hannibal does not break eye contact, even as he gives his length an experimental lick. And that has the lamb letting out the most pathetic sound possible, reaching down to

hang onto his hair.

He purrs at that, not caring that Will is messing up his immaculately combed hair. Without a second thought, he envelopes Will's cock with his cool mouth. Who just stares down at him with wide eyes and pants for air, trying to figure out if he likes this. Hannibal starts off gently, pulling back slowly until Will's barely out of his mouth before taking him in again.

"H-Hannibal." He cannot even stop himself from thrusting into the older man's mouth. Hannibal takes that as a sign to speed up, relishing the warmth on his tongue. Will is a mess above him and is not even sure if he will last much longer. He never thought he would see this man on his knees for anyone, especially himself. Hannibal, on the other hand, is taking pride in making the man above him absolutely crumble into pieces. Even if he saw Will everyday, forever, he would certainly remember this time. Will uses his grip on Hannibal's hair to hold him in place while bucking into his mouth like his life depends on it. He does not last much longer, maybe a thrust or two before he is spilling down his throat.

Hannibal practically purrs as he greedily swallows everything Will gives him, smiling up at him with his eyes. When he feels the hold on his hair loosen a bit, he pulls off to turn his head to bite down on the swell of Will's inner thigh. The sweet taste of blood mingling with the bitter aftertaste on his tongue makes for an interesting cocktail of his little lamb. Will shudders and has to use the counter to hold himself up. He can't lie and say he doesn't enjoy this, Hannibal has him letting out soft sounds and pressing his skin closer to his mouth. Against what's probably the better judgment screaming in his mind, he listens more to his piqued curiosity and bites down harder, moaning at the rush of fresh blood that follows. Will shakes and reaches down with one hand to hang onto his hair.

"You are temptation made flesh," Hannibal breathes out against his skin. He licks the wound free of any stray rivulets, not wanting any bit of his boy to go to waste. Will sighs a little and pulls him up to hug him, just wanting to be close. He hugs his little lamb back, basking in his warmth.

"Are you alright, sweet boy?"

"Mhm." He nods and nuzzles his shoulder. Hannibal hums in response and gets Will looking presentable again. Pressing a quick kiss to his head, he returns to their forgotten baking venture. Will goes to wash his hands quickly then goes back to slicing apples. Before long, the pie is prepped and put in the oven to bake. Hannibal relaxes with his hip on the counter, arms crossed and smiling softly as he recounts their little tryst. Will sits at the stool and yawns, stretching big. With a hum, he turns to look at Will after a short while.

"It shouldn't be much longer now."

"I know." He smiles then looks around a little, "It's pretty in here."

Hannibal smiles at him in return. "Thank you, Will. Aesthetics are rather important to me. Living in a dark, decrepit space won't do you any good, especially as an immortal being."

"That would just be depressing," he says and laughs a little.

"Exactly," he responds with a chuckle. "Though, finery has little value without someone to share it with."

"I guess you're glad you have someone now then."

"Yes, I guess I am." Will smiles and rests his chin on his arms, waiting patiently for his food to be done. When it finally is, Hannibal gets it out of the oven with some thick dish towels and sets it on the counter to cool. Will can barely hold himself back, it smells so good he is sure he is drooling. When Hannibal gets a good look at Will's almost starstruck expression, he cannot help but chuckle.

"Be patient, little lamb. It's far too hot to be enjoyed just yet."

"It smells so good though." He laughs and smiles a little.

“Perhaps it does, but the last thing we need is you sustaining another injury because you were too impatient,” he says teasingly, his own smile quirking the corners of his lips. Will goes red in the face and covers it with his hands, feeling a little embarrassed. Hannibal chuckles at that and moves to uncover Will’s face.

“Oh, sweet boy. It’s alright.”

“You said that on purpose.” He glares at him playfully and huffs.

“You must have a filthier mind than you originally let on, for I wasn’t insinuating anything,” he says with a smirk.

“Well- okay when you-“ Will sighs and huffs, feeling like he just got caught doing something wrong. Hannibal gently grasps Will’s chin and inches his face closer until they are mere centimeters away. Unfortunately for Will, Hannibal finds the poor boy to be just too much fun to tease.

“‘When I’ what, little lamb?”

“I’ve learned a lot in the time I’ve been with you.” Will swallows and leans into his hand.

“Such as?”

“Well, what we did before, a-and the other day.” He just stares at the counter top, feeling like a mess.

“And what did we do, darling boy?” he asks while leaning to nose at his throat, breathing in his scent.

“We-we ummm… we got close.” Hannibal chuckles at that surprisingly innocent answer.

“Is that all?”

“You did things that made me feel good.” Will mumbles and licks his lips. The older man just reaches up to pat Will’s cheek, still chuckling.

“I take it back. You’re still rather innocent, my darling boy.”

“Is that a bad thing?” He tilts his head into his hand and hums.

“It most certainly isn’t,” he replies softly while caressing his cheek.

Despite these intimate moments, Hannibal cannot stop thinking about their earlier revelations, plaguing his thoughts even as the months pass and the seasons change. As the leaves fall and the bare, gnarled branches left in their wake become covered in a perpetual blanket of ice, the vampire and his mortal companion have grown closer. Will is currently curled up in the library and reading one of the few books he hasn’t finished. He guesses when he’s done with this one he’ll read them all again. Hannibal made sure Will was absolutely covered in furs before moving to start a fire in the fireplace, wanting his little lamb to be as warm and cozy as possible. The lamb sets his book down and curls up a little to watch Hannibal, smiling softly. With his job finished, the older man moves to take his seat on the sofa next to Will, who he notices was staring at him. Chuckling, he finally sits down.

“Did you find me more interesting than your books, little lamb?”

“I usually do.” He smiles and snuggles up to his side while going back to reading.

“Oh really?” he asks teasingly. “I never realized you were that fond of me.” Though, given his ability to listen to others’ thoughts, he did know. He cannot shut that off more than Will can shut off his own thinking.

“Stop lying.” Will laughs and leans over a bit to kiss his cheek. That earns Will a small laugh. Hannibal has definitely come to enjoy how affectionate his little lamb can be. However, he is unsure if he can reciprocate those feelings physically. He knows he is capable of pleasuring Will, but treating him like a lover would? He finds himself pondering more and more about that as the days go by. The vampire wants to, that much is certain, but can he

open his still heart to him? Could he spend the rest of Will's days in a peaceful haze, or would he not be able to live without him? Then, that poses another question: Would Will see Hannibal as he truly is and accept his world?

Would Will accept his "gift"?

End of chapter four.

Chapter End Notes

Intimacy issues being he can't even make a pie without pleasing his little lamb. Will certainly doesn't mind.

Purgatorio

Chapter Summary

Will has a choice to make: give in to sin and have Hannibal fully, or remain as he is, pure and clean…

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

‘Could Will accept my ‘gift’?’ is something Hannibal has been asking himself over the course of a few weeks. This isn’t something he can force Will into, given the trials and tribulations an immortal life has to offer. He desires his companion desperately and wholeheartedly, but he also wants him to know that he has a choice in the matter. Over the seasons Will had come to greatly enjoy spending time with Hannibal. It was nothing like what he had expected. He has been cared for and shown affection the whole time. He decided to stay on the vampire's good side and try to live out his days in the castle.

“Will,” he starts, “do you enjoy living here?” Will hums and turns to look at him while processing the question then nods.

“Yes, I do.” Hannibal gives his own nod in response.

“Then, I think I’m going to amend our bargain and keep you here as long as you’d like. I… I’ve come to enjoy having you by my side far more than I anticipated.” Will blinks then just nods and goes back to his book, thinking that the conversation is over. Hannibal swallows before speaking again.

“I have another offer that I would like to propose. Though, I want to preface it with the fact that you do have a choice in the matter. You can refuse, you can even leave, if you so choose.”

Will is a bit shocked by that and frowns while looking back at Hannibal, “Why would I wish to leave?” The vampire shakes his head.

“It’s only an option. I wanted to inform you of all of your available choices before proceeding any further.”

“Alright?” Will tilts his head a bit, feeling confused.

“Like I mentioned earlier, I enjoy your company, perhaps more than I should. So, I’ve been wondering if…” Hannibal trails off, biting his lip while trying to steel his resolve. “Would you want to… to be like me?” Will looks at him with wide eyes before starting to stutter over his words a bit. He eventually takes a deep breath and closes his eyes for a second to pull himself together, after that he looks back at Hannibal.

“Like you?”

“Yes. Like me. A vampire.” He finds himself feeling a sort of tightness in his chest, one he has not felt in over a millennia. He is absolutely nervous, dreading the possibility of Will rejecting him. Will licks his lips and stares at him for a moment then to his hands.

“Would I… would I still be me or would I change?” Hannibal thinks for a moment before answering.

“You wouldn’t change. Not at first, at least. You’re familiar with both Tristan and I, and how we differ. That only occurred with the passage of time, not the actual transformation. So, yes, you would still be you, little lamb.”

“What about… the whole blood drinking thing?”

“You can subsist on animals, or other supernatural beings, if you’d prefer. But to grow stronger, you’d need human blood or blood from your sire, which would be me, if you accept this ‘gift’.”

“That wouldn’t harm you?”

“Not in moderation. You’d have to supplement your cravings from another source, as well.” Will thinks for a while, rubbing his hands across the furs to try and calm himself.

“I don’t want to hurt anyone.”

“You don’t have to. And if you’re worried about even the chance of that, you’re allowed to refuse.”

“No, no. I’d like to.” He nods and bites his lip, “I think I would.” Hannibal looks at him with a serious expression.

“Will, I need you to be absolutely certain that you want this. No ‘I think’s. Because once I give you this ‘gift’, there is no returning it. Do you understand?” Will nods quickly and looks him in the eyes.

“I know.” He takes a deep breath and lets it out slowly.

“Good. You don’t have to make a decision right away. Even then, you’ll have time to change your mind, regardless of your original choice.”

“The time I’ve spent here, with you, has been the best in my life,” he starts, “I don’t think I’d want to live without you. Nor would I want to go back to my old life.” The vampire finds himself feeling oddly emotional at that, bloody tears pricking at his eyes.

“But would you be alright living- being like this?” He takes one of Will’s warm hands and presses it to his icy cheek. “Dead. Cold. Never to see the light of day again?”

“As long as you promise to never tire of me and always stick by my side.” He smiles softly and rubs his thumb along his cheek bone. Hannibal smiles a little along with him. He shuts his eyes, creating a small crimson streak down his cheek.

“I promise.” Will huffs out a little laugh and wipes his tears, not really disturbed by it since he has grown used to the sight of blood. Hannibal leans into Will’s hands, just grateful to have him here.

“Don’t cry, Hannibal.” He says and laughs a little before leaning in to kiss his head, “It’s okay.” The older man chuckles in response.

“I’m sorry. I’m only glad that you see me as I truly am, but still choose to accept me.” Will smiles softly at that and keeps wiping his cheeks.

“Of course I do.”

“Thank you,” he says with a small nod. Will nods back and hugs him close, rubbing his back while he does. Hannibal gladly reciprocates the embrace.

“If you change your mind, for any reason, or are just uncertain: tell me, please.”

“I promise I will.” With a nod, Hannibal presses his cheek to Will’s.

“Good boy.” Will blushes and rubs his cheek against Hannibal’s for a second and hums. The vampire hugs his little lamb closer, still reeling from their confessions.

“So um… how does this stuff work?”

“The actual process or the ludicrous steps required by vampire high-society?”

“Both?” He laughs a little and smiles nervously. Hannibal nods in understanding.

“Well, in order to create a vampire, the recipient would need to be drained of their blood and have that replaced by the blood of their sire. One can do this all at once or over the

course of a few days. Though, in accordance to our current customs, this would happen during a sort of presentation over the span of a single morning. These events are held just before a new moon, so the new generation of vampires can be 'born' and presented during the darkest night of the month."

"Uh huh… and how… how would I not be dead?"

"It's not an exact science. No one knows why vampirism is passed from one individual to the next in that way, we only know that's how. Though, we've always assumed it relates to the regenerative properties of our blood" he answers honestly. Will nods and hums a little, playing with his hands a bit.

"Does it hurt?"

"I wouldn't know personally. Like I said before, I thought I had died before then. However, from what I heard, it's not a pleasant experience, especially when you'll feel a strong need to feed right after you awaken." He nods again and picks at the furs, sighing a little.

"Will I have to… ya know… drink blood afterwards?"

"You'll need to," he answers with a nod.

"And it'll be human?"

"It can be." He hums before starting again, "Or it can be mine. It's up to you, really."

"Which one do you think I should do?" The vampire shakes his head.

"That's not my decision to make. It's yours." Will swallows while thinking before speaking up.

"I'd like it to be from you the first time… I don't want to hurt someone."

"Alright, then. I'll be right there with you the whole time. You'll have nothing to worry about, little lamb." Hannibal decides now may not be the best time to explain the sexual habits between vampires and how feeding ties into that. He would rather not overwhelm the poor thing with too much information. Will nods and takes a deep breath before smiling softly.

"Thank you, Hannibal."

"Anything for you, my sweet boy," he answers with a gentle smile. Will smiles a little and snuggles up.

"How long do I have?"

"Tonight is a full moon. Being halfway through a lunar month, you have about fourteen days until the next presentation."

"That's a long time." He mumbles and huffs a little.

"The more time to think about this, the better, little lamb. Trust me."

"I do, it's just… a lot of waiting."

"The time will go by in the blink of an eye, I'm sure." Will nods and snuggles up to him, pulling the furs tighter around himself. The eldest of the two presses a kiss to the little lamb's temple.

"Would you like to rest in your room? I'm sure your bed is much more comfortable than the sofa and I combined," he manages to joke. Will hums and nuzzles his shoulder.

"Only if you come with me." Hannibal sighs softly and nods, always unable to refuse him.

"I'd follow you to the ends of the earth, if you asked it of me, my darling boy."

"But now I'm only asking you to come to bed." He says and laughs a little.

"Then bed it is." He chuckles while carrying Will in his arms, traversing to his bedroom. Will just smiles and curls up against him. When they reach Will's door, Hannibal carefully gets it open and lays Will onto his plush bed before moving to shut the door.

"Come snuggle me before I freeze." Will jokes and laughs, rolling onto his back.

"I'm not sure how much I can help with that, given my 'condition'." The vampire chuckles

and toes off his shoes before climbing into bed with the smaller man.

"Doesn't matter, just wanna be held."

"As you wish," he replies softly. Hannibal wraps his arms around Will and pulls him impossibly close. The other man just curls up in his arms with a small, happy sound. Even though this is how their evening routine has gone for the last week or so, Hannibal still finds himself practically speechless at the sight of Will in his arms. So warm and full of life, it would be a cardinal sin to snatch that away from him. But he also feels an insatiable desire to burn in the back of his mind. It is truly a moral dilemma, even for someone like himself.

Will shifts around to look at him after a moment and hums while blinking, "Stop staring, it's weird." He jokes and laughs a little. Hannibal swallows and glances away.

"I wasn't 'staring.' I was simply lost in thought." Will laughs and shakes his head then cups Hannibal's cheeks to turn his face back, which earns him a small blush from the older man.

"I was only teasing." The vampire leans into Will's warm hands a little.

"Which you seem to be doing a lot more, lately," he replies in an amused tone. Will does one of his lopsided smiles and lets out a soft chuckle.

"I only do it because I'm comfortable now."

"I'm glad you are," he says with a smile just before pressing a kiss to his cheek. Despite knowing Will in various ways over the span of a few months, Hannibal still makes a point to not kiss him properly. Before, it was because he felt Will should have gotten to experience that with someone he cherishes, and always assumed that would never be him. The vampire always made an effort to keep his mortal companion happy and comfortable, but he never thought Will could see him as anything but his captor.

However, his positive response to the notion of being immortal alongside him changed his perspective. So, in light of their new circumstances, Hannibal now wishes to wait until after the presentation, and to let Will be the one to make the first move. Will smiles and kisses his cheek back, respecting Hannibal's boundaries even if they have not been spoken. Hannibal is certainly grateful for that, which he lets his little lamb know by nestling his cold face into his warm neck and places a few quick kisses to it. Will sighs happily and pets his hair while he does, stretching his neck out to give Hannibal more room.

Hannibal finds himself escalating the situation, turning his chaste kisses into heated nibbles. Will lets out a soft sound and bites his lip, not sure if this is a good thing or not. The vampire is excellent at multitasking, his lithe fingers swiftly undoing the buttons on Will's shirt as he leaves little love-bites on the supple skin of his neck. Will whimpers and writhes beneath him, trying his best to help Hannibal, who soon gets the shirt open. He quickly starts trailing his soft bites down to Will's chest as if there is no time to spare. The younger man just presses into his bites, enjoying every bit of the attention.

"How are you feeling, sweet boy?" he mumbles against his skin.

"Good," he manages to whisper, looking down at where Hannibal is, who hums softly in response while resuming his nipping. The vampire decides to take his sweet time, wanting Will to feel nothing but pleasure. Will swallows and closes his eyes so he can focus on how it feels to be shown this type of affection. It is the best he has received yet, Hannibal being so gentle and slow. To him, it is perfect.

After a while, Hannibal takes it a step further. He tentatively brushes the pad of his thumb over one of Will's nipples, crimson eyes flickering upwards to catch any possible signs of discomfort. Will moans softly and arches up into his touch almost immediately, wanting more. Emboldened by that reaction, he moves to lap and suck at the other, never ceasing his teasing. Will does not even know what to do now, being teased like this is enjoyable and

aggravating all at once. He buries a hand in Hannibal's hair and pulls him closer to his chest after a moment to hopefully speed things up. The vampire chuckles.

"Growing impatient, are we?"

"M-maybe just a little," Will mumbles and closes his eyes.

"All you have to do is tell me what you want," he purrs, pressing his leg between Will's, who whimpers and grinds against him a bit but manages to calm himself.

"You, I want you."

"And how do you want me, little lamb?"

"Completely and fully. All for myself." Will doesn't even know where that came from, it just popped into his head but that does not make it any less true. Hannibal shivers at that response, swallowing thickly before speaking again.

"Do you know what you're asking for, sweet boy?"

"Yes." He nods and swallows, he had figured it out eventually due to his own curiosity. Will had perused Hannibal's tasteful, but nonetheless filthy collection of erotic art. His face turned a bright shade of red at the sight of it all. However, skimming over the vast collection of sex and debauchery pales in comparison to actually experiencing it.

"It would be rude of me to refuse you then, now wouldn't it?" he asks while sliding a hand up to gently grasp Will's chin. Will licks his lips and tips his head a bit.

"Yes sir, I think it would." Hannibal nods in response. He climbs off of Will and makes his way to the door.

"I'm only going to get something that would make this easier for you. I'll return shortly." Will simply nods and lays there for a moment then gets himself completely undressed and laid out on the furs, wanting to impress Hannibal. And it is certainly a pleasant surprise for the vampire when he returns with some oil to use for lubricant.

"Well, well. Aren't you eager," he teases. Will does his best to stay confident but cannot stop his face from turning bright red.

"I told you I was only a moment ago."

"Mm true," he replies while taking long strides to the nightstand, placing the bottle on the surface as he loosens his silk cravat. Will watches him with lazy eyes, curling up to hide his body. He lets the bit of silk flutter to the floor, along with his elaborately embroidered vest. The vampire languidly rolls up his sleeves before retaking his spot above Will, who swallows and rolls onto his back to look at him. He just stares into Hannibal's eyes for now, wondering if he looks like a mess or not.

"My gorgeous boy," he murmurs with a soft purr while running a hand up Will's soft belly. Will smiles a little even though he shies away from his touch just a bit. Hannibal lets out a soft hum as he chases Will's movements with his palm. "Are you nervous, Will?"

"No I just, I feel a bit overly aware of my body." He says softly and bites his lip.

"You needn't worry about anything. Just relax and let me take care of you." Will nods and does as he is told. Hannibal takes that as a sign he can continue, gently biting and sucking one of his nipples while teasing the other with his fingers. Will wraps his legs around the vampire's waist and pulls him closer, letting out pathetic little sounds as he works. Hannibal then promptly starts to leave marks on Will's stomach, skating his hands up those soft thighs. Will takes a deep breath and closes his eyes, just relaxing and enjoying the moment. After a while, the older man reaches over to retrieve the bottle of oil from the nightstand. Will watches his hands and swallows thickly, his stomach feeling like there is a swarm of butterflies beating around inside it.

"Will it hurt?"

"If you're prepared properly, the worst you should feel is some discomfort." Will takes a

deep breath then nods.

"I trust you."

"I know you do, sweet boy." Will blushes at that and closes his eyes to hopefully relax. Hannibal moves slowly, yet meticulously as he gets a few fingers coated in oil. He situates himself between Will's legs, spreading his thighs with his own knees.

"You'll stop if I ask?"

"Of course I will, little lamb," he answers. "I may not be human, but I'm not a monster." Will smiles softly and nods.

"Thank you."

"Of course." The vampire carefully presses a slick finger to his entrance while massaging Will's hip with his other hand. "Now, do try to relax." Will nods and takes a deep breath while allowing his muscles to loosen. Hannibal makes a sound of approval when he is able to slip the finger in with relative ease. He waits a moment in case of any pain or discomfort for Will. The lamb just nods and tips his head back to let out a soft sound. When Hannibal is sure Will is alright, he moves his finger slowly, wanting the younger man to grow acclimated to this first before moving any further. That earns him a whine from Will, who squeezes his eyes shut to help himself focus. The vampire smiles softly at this reaction and decides to experiment with various speeds and patterns when he manages to work in a second digit, Will makes a choked sound and arches up off the bed.

"O-oh." This makes Hannibal stop and he looks up at the younger man with a concerned expression.

"Are you alright?"

"Yeah." He says and nods quickly, "Y-yeah, just surprised."

"Do you need a moment?" Hannibal asks gently.

"I don't think so." Will mumbles and closes his eyes, "I'm okay." He nods and goes back to working on getting Will properly stretched, eventually adding a third finger. Hannibal keeps up a slow pace at this point, but curls his fingers every so often. Eventually, he hits a spot inside of Will that makes him melt and stiffen at the same time while letting a wanton moan slip past his lips. The vampire aims for that spot again, and again, with a smirk playing on his lips. That has the lamb whimpering and whining, practically begging him for more but not being able to use his words.

"Does that feel good, sweet boy?" he asks teasingly, speeding up his hand.

"Y-ye-yes. Yes." He nods and grabs at Hannibal's free arm, just needing something to hold onto. He chuckles at Will's desperation, despite his own increasing arousal at the almost pathetic sight before him. Will whimpers and throws his arm over so it covers his face, feeling like he's being laughed at.

"You have no reason to be embarrassed, little lamb," he says while moving Will's arm from his face. "You look absolutely divine." He turns red at those words then whimpers and rocks back against his fingers.

"Please."

"'Please' what, sweet boy?"

"I'm ready."

"Are you sure?" he questions with a purr. Will nods and looks him in the eyes.

"I'm sure." Hannibal nods in response before swiftly removing the now irksome articles of clothing. He returns his attention to the bottle of oil and goes about slicking up his cock with leisurely strokes. Will watches him, licking his lips at the sight. The vampire chuckles when he notices the pair of eyes watching him intently, but chooses not to say anything. He resumes his place between Will's legs, holding his plump thighs with his large hands.

“Are you sure this is what you want?” Will nods and rests back into the pillows and furs.

“Yes, I’m sure.” Hannibal nods and slowly moves his hips forward while biting his lip, pushing in as gently as possible. Will immediately grips onto his shoulders, clawing into them and whimpering. The older man chokes back a groan, his last thread of control threatening to snap after having wanted this for months.

“How… How are you feeling?”

“Fine,” he manages to answer after a second or two of breathing, “You-you can continue.”

“Are you sure? We can stop, if you need to?” Will nods and cups his cheeks, wanting to make eye contact for the first time in his life.

“Hannibal, I’m sure.” And that answer, that reassurance, is all Hannibal needed to know before starting a slow, but confident pace. He maintains eye contact with the man below him, groaning softly. Will just stares back up at him, his mouth hanging open in a silent moan. The vampire mumbles something about how beautiful Will is as he nuzzles his neck, thrusting into him harder. The lamb clings to him, reaching up with a hand to plant it firmly in Hannibal’s hair. He grunts when he feels the vice-like grip in his hair, but Hannibal is undeterred. At this point Will can barely think but he knows he must sound like some wild animal being bred, that is what he feels like, after all.

Somehow, this sheltered lamb sent to the slaughter is now carnal desires in human form, and that drives Hannibal wild with lust. He finds himself quickly losing the battle with his self-restraint. Will tightens his legs around Hannibal’s waist to help stay in the moment but he cannot stop his vision from going blurry at the edges. To him, it is all too much and not enough at the same time.

“So good to me, my darling boy,” the vampire mutters through a moan. He then gives it all he has, snapping his hips forward with an unbridled fervor. Will lets out a scream that trails off into a moan and hugs Hannibal as close as he can. He bites down hard on his shoulder to help himself deal with the cramp-like pain in his abdomen, which causes the vampire to growl in pleasure. After a few more thrusts, Hannibal shivers as he reaches his orgasm, grinding into Will as he rides out his euphoria. The lamb reaches his own release soon after, but keeps clinging to Hannibal, trying to catch his breath and make his brain work again. The older man is the first to recover, pulling the furs over them so Will doesn’t catch a chill.

“Are you alright?” Will nods and moves around to snuggle up to Hannibal.

“Mhm, ‘m great.”

“I hope I didn’t hurt you, sweet boy.”

“You didn’t.” Will mumbles, already falling asleep from being so warm and tired. Hannibal nods and holds his lamb close, never wanting to part from him. He finds himself dozing off, as well, consciousness fading along with the moon as dawn approaches. Will has already given in, snoring softly while sleeping peacefully. The vampire soon succumbs to sleep, resting with his love.

Will would accept his gift, and Hannibal is glad he asked.

End of chapter five.

Chapter End Notes

So, Will said yes! And we finally got to them consummating their relationship. Stay tuned for the next chapter, when you get to meet a few familiar faces.

Paradiso

Chapter Summary

The end of the lunar month is nigh. Will has submitted to carnal desires and Hannibal is finally able to give Will the ceremonial “gift” in return…

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

The weeks fly by in a blink of an eye, just as Hannibal predicted. During that time, he was sure to educate Will on not only the etiquette of high-society, but the cultures and lifestyle of the vampiric race the little lamb would soon join. It is safe to say that the vampire spoiled his sweet boy throughout those couple of weeks. Will, on the other hand, was a bit overwhelmed by all the information at first but over time he had gotten the hang of things and gained more confidence.

Everything was prepared days in advance, for Hannibal could not exactly keep still. He had even replied to the invitation to inform the host of their attendance as soon as it arrived. The immortal man was much too excited to welcome Will into his world completely. The lamb is more nervous than excited, nervous to slip up and say the wrong thing, nervous to walk the wrong way, nervous to introduce himself in the wrong manner- he is simply nervous.

On the eve before the morning in which Will is to be turned, he and Hannibal are on horseback, traversing to the Verger territory. Mason Verger of the infamous Verger line is to be the host of this event, as is the current custom. Hannibal has been dreading making conversation with the heir, preferring to make conversation with Lady Verger, who is called Margot, much more, which is not unlike the other vampire lords and ladies who come to these events. He has also heard gossip that Margot had taken a mortal pet, who goes by the name of Alana. From what he has heard, she is a pretty little thing and brilliant minded. The vampire hopes Will gets along with her especially. Will is humming a small tune and playing with Gawain’s mane while he rides, not too worried about falling or getting off course.

Hannibal feels oddly guilty about what is to come of Will’s existence as he watches the young man be so at peace. He will no longer be mortal, no longer going to be full of life, and Hannibal is to be responsible for that. Though, he also cannot imagine “living” his immortal existence without his lamb. That desire to never be alone again, especially with one who sees and accepts him for who he truly is, trumps the guilt of what that would mean for Will. The lamb glances at Hannibal after a minute and looks him over.

“You’re thinking.” Hannibal nods.

“I am. I’m fretting over having to meet with Lord Verger,” he responds. It’s not exactly a lie, but it is not the main thought that is plaguing the vampire’s mind. Will nods and stops braiding the small section of Gawain’s mane he had been fidgeting with.

“He seems like terrible company.”

“He certainly is. Even for vampire society, he’s much too flamboyant in typical

conversation. All of the lords and ladies at this event, myself included, enjoy the company of the honorable Lady Verger. She has an interesting manner of thinking."

"That's the woman with a human on her side, right?"

"She is," he answers with a nod. "I certainly hope she turns Miss Bloom. They both have a way of making every conversation easy, yet intellectually satisfying."

"I should introduce myself to them then."

"I would assume so. You'll be seeing them more often once you're one of us. Though, I won't expect you to converse with Mason." Hannibal glances over a Will briefly. "No one does," he adds with a hearty chuckle.

"So it would be acceptable to avoid him even though he's our host?"

"In a way, yes. As a mortal, you're not exactly expected to do much. I will make all of the obligatory conversation with him. You're not expected to say a word, just to be on my arm and look pretty," the vampire teases, despite that being absolutely true. Will laughs and smiles brightly, feeling his heart flutter a bit.

"So I'm an accessory," he jokes.

"Of course not," he says with a smile. "I'd keep you human, if that were the case." Will blushes and smiles back.

"I'm glad you see me fit to receive your gift."

"I could tell you would be the moment I laid eyes on you." The younger man has to look away before he embarrasses himself. He goes back to fidgeting with his horse's mane, wearing a small smile this time.

They keep up their light chatter along the way and before long, they arrive at the Verger castle. The two men get their horses settled in the stables, making sure they are properly fed and watered after the journey. Then, they make their way inside. The expansive ballroom is lit with a row of crystal chandeliers, clearly expensive, with the guests cheerfully milling about under them. Black silk hangs from the icy stones. What would be large windows lining the walls are covered in blood-red draperies. Hannibal is certain the hall would be pitch black without the lighting fixtures. Will feels a bit intimidated by it all and stays close to Hannibal's side, who keeps a protective hold on his little lamb.

The vampire makes his rounds, making cursory conversation with acquaintances, mostly to show Will around. He wants everyone to know who the newest member is to be affiliated with, that Will is to be his and no one else's, especially to Lord Verger. Mason is selfish, even to vampire standards, so Hannibal does not want there to be any "confusion". Eventually, they reach Lady Verger and Miss Bloom just before the sun rises. The oldest of the men greets them with a genuine smile.

"Good morning, Margot, Alana," he says with a little polite nod of the head in their directions. The women do the same in return.

"Likewise, Hannibal," Lady Verger replies while looking over at Will. "And this must be the mortal we've been hearing so much about. Mason surely couldn't keep his mouth shut about him." The male vampire finds his jaw clenching at that statement, fangs digging into his gums.

"So it would seem." Will forgets everything he had been taught for a solid minute then dips his head down.

"It's a pleasure to finally put names and faces together." Hannibal nods in silent approval at Will's greeting.

Margot and Hannibal discuss the philosophies of life and how those change when death has a way of being evaded. Will and Alana seem to be getting along well, which makes him smile. They carry on with their conversations until the older man's ears prick at the sound of

a clock chiming in the distance. Mason, in his usual, tasteless fashion, announces the dawn, trailing on into a speech about the coming of a new vampire generation and how this "Becoming" is a gift for all of their kind. The guests all seem to tone him out, especially Hannibal and Margot.

Soon, Lord Verger declares the time for the vampires to bestow their "gifts" upon them. In their little pairs, and a small group that appears to be a harem of sorts, much to Hannibal's surprise, they make their way to their prepared rooms. Will takes a deep breath and clings to Hannibal's arm, eyes a little wide with a mixture of fear and excitement. The vampire notices the scent of anxiety on him and gives his little lamb a concerned look.

"You needn't worry about anything, sweet boy. I promise I'll take care of you."

"I know, I'm mostly worried about doing something wrong."

"You won't," he starts, cupping Will's cheek, "You could never." Will leans into his hand a bit but swallows.

"How can you be so sure?"

"Because I'll handle everything. You just focus on staying relaxed." Hannibal gets Will laid down on the bed and crawls over top of him. He presses a sweet kiss above his racing carotid artery, almost as if saying goodbye. Will tenses and licks his lips, they feel painfully dry.

"I'm scared," he whispers, thinking it should be okay to be scared in this situation. He hopes it is.

"I know, little lamb. It's alright to be." He takes in his scent one last time, memorizing it, wondering if and how it will change after the transformation. Will just lays there, taking deep and slow breaths and thinking about how these will be his last. Hannibal swallows before sinking his teeth into the flesh of his throat, feeling his fangs tear through the skin and muscle there. Will tries his best to stay silent but cannot stop the small whine that slips past his lips.

"Hush, sweet boy. It's okay. You're alright," he mumbles, doing his best to console the poor thing, even if it is more akin to a lion comforting its prey. Will nods a little and keeps taking deep breaths, even if they are shakier than before. Hannibal feels his throat tighten, the guilt of what he is doing slicing through him like a hot knife. He is ultimately killing the one he loves all for the sake of companionship, regardless of the fact he'll return.

"H-how long will it take?" The vampire sits up a little, taking a break from ripping his throat apart, eyes brimming with crimson tears.

"You needn't worry about that. You needn't worry about anything." Will cups his cheeks when he notices the tears and feels like he may cry too.

"Please don't."

"Please forgive me, Will. Please." He makes a sound akin to a whimper as he pushes past his hands and back down to his neck, not wanting to prolong Will's suffering. Will tries to speak but isn't able to, he can only manage a choking sound as his throat is being torn into. Hannibal cannot stop the sob that works its way out of his throat, his bloody tears mingling with the crimson flood pouring from the gouges in Will's throat. The older man hates the satisfaction and nourishment he feels as he gorges himself on the blood of his sacrificial lamb. Will eventually just closes his eyes and lets himself go, trying his best to forget what's happening. Wading into the quiet of the stream, as it seems. Hannibal, however, is an absolute mess. He whimpers like a beast mourning the death of its mate as he tries to quiet his sobs.

The vampire only stops to make sure Will is still breathing. It is eerily shallow and ragged, but nevertheless present. Hannibal wants to ensure that Will consumes some of his blood before draining him completely. He raises his wrist to his mouth and rips into his skin with

his teeth, watching the almost black liquid flow freely before placing the wound to Will's lips. He places his other hand behind the lamb's head, tilting it upwards so the liquid runs down his throat. Will opens his bleary eyes just a bit, making a weak sound before closing them and swallowing. Hannibal lets Will keep drinking until the wound closes. Only then does he continue draining Will, feeling the blood stumble and then halt completely on his tongue. Will lays there, taking one last shuddering breath before going completely still.

Hannibal cradles his darling boy in his arms, weeping for the last vestiges of innocence he just stole from him. Will had consented, he knows this, but it felt absolutely criminal all the same. Will felt so light and cold in his arms. He buries his face in Will's soft curls, begging him to wake up. But he has to wait.

Hours pass before Will wakes again, and when he does he just lays there. He only opens his eyes for a second before wincing and squeezing them closed. Everything is much too bright. Hannibal fails to notice that Will is awake, too busy holding him and praying for his forgiveness. The lamb shifts around to turn his head in the direction of Hannibal's voice then reaches and searches with his hands until he can cup his cheeks. This startles the older man, who looks at Will with wide eyes, dried blood still streaking his face.

"Will? Darling?" he breathes out, almost having to question his reality.

"Can't open my eyes yet, it's too bright." He mumbles but squints at him anyways. The older vampire nods in understanding.

"Take your time, my love. This 'gift' heightens all of our senses. You'll just have to adjust to them." Will nods and curls up against his chest with a small hum. Hannibal is doing his best to be gentle and soothing to the fledgling vampire, rubbing soft circles on his back.

"I'd like to lay down, I think," he whispers, trying his best to push down the ever growing thirst. Hannibal fulfills his request, carefully laying him back down. Will immediately cuddles up and presses his nose to the crook of Hannibal's neck, closing his eyes and hoping that will help him relax. Hannibal lets out a soft hum, just happy his lamb made it through the transformation in one piece. The longer he is close to Hannibal's neck, the stronger his urge to feed becomes until it is almost unbearable and he has to move away. The older man blinks at Will, trying to figure out what is wrong with him. It is a little harder to hear his thoughts now that Will is in this form, but Hannibal is soon able to figure out that he must be thirsty.

"Will, you have to feed," he says bluntly while closing the space between them again. "You'll waste away into nothing if you don't drink anything soon." He shakes his head and scoots away again.

"I don't want to hurt you."

"I'm not asking. You need to, darling."

"I'll be fine for a little longer." He knows that is a lie, but he says it anyway. Hannibal huffs at his answer and just goes about shrugging off his coat. He unbuttons his vest and the dress shirt beneath it before pulling the collar to expose the crook of his neck. He then moves closer to Will and pulls his face to his cold skin. The older vampire swallows and shivers a bit in anticipation, but otherwise stays composed.

"Drink, sweet boy." And Will can't stop himself from sinking his fangs into Hannibal's neck, he manages to keep himself from ripping his throat out though. Hannibal moans and tips his head back a bit, gripping Will's hair. The younger man growls softly at that and just latches onto that spot. He glances at Will as he lets out a groan, a soft smile gracing his features.

"There- There we go. Have your fill, my love." Will does as he is told, drinking until he

feels full and drowsy. Hannibal spent the time trying not to writhe throughout Will's meal, feeling absolutely restless. When he has finished, he licks his lips and pulls away just a little to look at Hannibal in an almost animalistic manner, like he has found something interesting. A bit dazed, the older man tilts his head a little, gazing into Will's now steely blue, almost crystal clear eyes.

"What's the matter?" Will does not answer and simply moves to be almost in his face, still looking him in the eyes. Hannibal shudders. "Yes?"

"Kiss me." It is not a question or even a statement, it is more along the lines of an order. Hannibal finds himself unable to refuse, cupping the younger vampire's cheeks as he crashes their lips together with a soft sigh. He had been waiting for this moment for what felt like eons. Will smiles at his small victory while kissing him back. With a hand in his hair, Hannibal draws his lamb closer, never wanting this to end. Will slings a leg over his waist so he's straddling Hannibal's lap and just lets out a happy sound, glad that he can finally have this. The older vampire looks absolutely pitiful, covered in blood and clinging to his sweet boy. When he pulls away, Will sighs softly and brushes some of Hannibal's hair away from his face.

"You're beautiful."

"So are you, little lamb." Will grins then leans in to start licking his face and neck clean. Hannibal purrs softly at the gentle treatment, tilting his head in directions that would make it easier. Once he finishes, Will lays down to rest with his head on Hannibal's chest, gently tracing little shapes on his skin. He keeps the younger vampire held close, still feeling the need to be comforting and protective of him.

"When can we go home?"

"Once you're presented, we can return home." Will nods and noses at his collarbone for a moment.

"How long till then?" Hannibal combs his fingers through his hair.

"The ceremony will be held after sundown." He nods again and decides to just relax and enjoy being pet. Hannibal is more than happy to keep Will company as he rests and recuperates. After an hour or so Will sits up and starts looking around, getting a little curious about his surroundings. Hannibal watches his curious boy as he redresses, happy to see that Will's energy has not seemed to have changed all that much. Will hums as he stands in front of a painting, eyes flicking over it while he takes it in.

"It's beautiful, isn't it? I'm surprised Mason has at least some sense when it comes to the fine arts," Hannibal jokes. The lamb nods in agreement then hums.

"Do you know the name?" He nods. "Hieronymus Bosch's Garden of Earthly Delights. I'm curious as to how it made its way into Verger hands."

"Maybe it was one Margot chose." Hannibal lets out a chuckle. "You're probably correct to assume that." Will smiles and glances over his shoulder at him.

"My clothes are bloody. I don't know if it's acceptable to go out there like this."

"I don't see why it wouldn't be. It's proof of what you went through."

"That's true." After looking the painting over a little longer he goes back over to sit on the bed with a hum.

"How are you feeling?"

"Odd, but okay." Hannibal nods.

"I wonder what your abilities will be," he muses out loud, mostly to himself. Will tilts his head with a thoughtful sound.

"Me too, I haven't really noticed anything yet though."

"You will, in due time. It'll start off slow, you almost won't realize it's there until it's

overwhelming. Then, you'll learn to manage it."

"Hopefully it's not something too difficult."

"I get the feeling you'll have something highly coveted amongst vampire society, given how exceptional you are," he says with a smile. Will blushes and laughs a little, dipping his head to hide his face.

"I thought all abilities were equal." Hannibal shrugs.

"There are abilities that most vampires have, such as shape-shifting, then there are others with more… uncommon ones, like me."

"I figured mind reading would be pretty common but I guess not."

"Out of the rarer ones, my skill is not the least common, nor is it sought after due to how overwhelming it can be."

"I can't imagine what it's like to have to hear what someone is thinking all the time, it must be terrible."

"It's certainly not easy. Though, what it does make much easier is conversations," he jokes with a chuckle. Will laughs a little while shaking his head.

"I suppose that's true." The older vampire hums softly.

"You're absolutely stunning." The lamb blushes at how random that was and faces him.

"Thank you, Hannibal."

"Of course, love." He hears a clock chime in the hall, knowing that the sun will soon set. They have to get ready to formally welcome Will, along with all the other fledglings, into their world. Hannibal can feel himself practically vibrate with excitement. Will tenses just a bit and rubs his hands on his knees.

"C-can we go back over what I'm about to do? I forgot."

"All you have to do is walk back into the ballroom with me. Then, I'll announce that you accepted my 'gift'. They'll all sense your overall presence has changed, along with your bloody clothes, and welcome you with a round of applause."

"Alright." He nods then stands and straightens his hair just a bit, wanting to look as nice as he can manage. Hannibal places a reassuring hand on his shoulder.

"You look wonderful, sweet boy."

"You always think so," he says with a small laugh and grins.

"Because you always do," the older vampire responds with his own smile. Will huffs a little then stands and takes a deep breath. He thinks a moment then moves to hug Hannibal, squeezing him tight. He blinks for a moment, but ultimately returns Will's embrace.

"It's alright, my love. You're alright."

"I know, I just wanted to hug you." Hannibal nods and just holds him. Will stays there, wanting to be held before going back into the room of strangers. After pressing a soft kiss to his head, the older of the two vampires speaks up.

"The sooner you're presented, the sooner we can make our way back home. And I'm sure Lady Verger and Miss Bloom are eager to see you." Will nods then pulls away a little. Hannibal follows after him just to press a kiss to his lips. The fledgling is a bit shocked but kisses him back while draping his arms around Hannibal's neck to pull him close. After a moment, he breaks the kiss.

"You're mine now," the taller man says with a happy purr as he noses at Will's cheek.

"I'm yours." Will confirms and rubs his cheek against his face. That makes Hannibal grin with sheer delight. "What's that look for?" Will asks with a small chuckle.

"I'm glad I can say that with the utmost certainty. To know that you've seen me and accepted me fully, it brings me nothing but joy." Will smiles then kisses him again, this time it is gentle and sweet.

“I’m glad.” Hannibal just nods in response before taking Will’s hand and ushering him out of the room. He takes his time leading him through the halls, wanting to let Will be eased into the situation. The younger vampire sighs and clings to him, feeling a little overwhelmed by everything. They soon reach the shut doors leading to the ballroom. Hannibal wraps a protective arm around Will’s waist.

“Are you ready, little lamb?” Will nods and leans into his side.

“I’m ready.” His sire smiles and, with that, he pushes the doors open. The guests inside all watch as Hannibal enters with his boy, his strides confident. Hundreds of gazes fall upon them as they wait for the news. He clears his throat before speaking.

“I gave him a rare gift,” he starts, voice proud and projecting throughout the hall. “And he accepted it.” Their fellow immortals erupt in cheers and applause. Hannibal looks around, a polite yet delighted smile on his face as he gently guides Will in front of him, putting him on display. He leans down by Will’s ear, wanting to tell him something meant for him and him alone.

“This is all I ever wanted for you, Will. For both of us.” Will takes a shaky breath and leans back against him.

“It’s beautiful.” Hannibal’s eyes crinkle with joy at his response before falling shut entirely as he holds him closer. Will decides to just let himself be held and shown off and buries his face into Hannibal’s neck the best he can. They stay like this a few moments more before making their exit, not wanting to overwhelm his fledgling. Both Hannibal and Will alike receive compliments and congratulations as they leave. Will stays pressed to his side until they reach their horses. He babies Gawain a bit and apologizes for being gone so long. Hannibal greets Lancelot like an old friend, patting his cheek a bit before walking him out of the stables.

“So… Now that I’m like… undying. Is there anything fun to do?” Hannibal hums while thinking of an honest answer to that question.

“Some like to travel the world or learn new skills. Others enjoy hosting lavish orgies or starting wars. It’s all dependent on taste,” he says with a small laugh. “Though, being immortal doesn’t mean you can’t be harmed or killed. So don’t go off being reckless, little lamb.”

“That’s why I was planning on having you with me no matter what I do.”

“Such a good boy,” he says jokingly, but not lacking adoration. He then climbs onto Lancelot’s back, letting the horse roam around a bit to stretch his legs. Will does the same, blushing at the pet name.

“I’ll need you.”

“You’re too sweet,” he muses out loud before starting off in the direction of their castle. Will smirks and kicks Gawain into a gallop, leaving Hannibal in the dust. He just laughs and follows after Will, determined not to lose him. The lamb just speeds up,even more determined to win. The older vampire clicks his tongue and urges Lancelot to move faster.

“Just give up, old man!”

“Never!”

“I'm just going to embarrass you!”

“I would have to feel ashamed for a loss for that to be true. And I never feel shame if I’m bested!”

“Oh yeah?!” Will laughs and pushes Gawain to go as fast as he can, grinning from ear to ear.

Racing Will on horseback in that dark forest has Hannibal reminiscing about those same races against Galahad when he was living as Tristan. The comparison makes him smile.

When the castle is finally in view Will speeds up, if that's even possible. Hannibal, resigned to his inevitable defeat, lets Lancelot slow into a comfortable trot, laughing to himself at Will's adorable bouts of energy. When he reaches the stables he just giggles and spins around to watch Hannibal, smirking and feeling successful.

"Alright, I suppose some congratulations are in order," he says to Will with a chuckle as he makes his way to the stables.

"What have I earned?"

"Whatever you'd like, I suppose." Will hums while thinking then dismounts and starts getting Gawain settled.

"I want to go see my family. One last time." Hannibal gives Will a concerned look.

"I'm more than happy to fulfill your request, but are you sure you'd like to do that? No one in your village is truly accepting of our kind." Will nods and smiles just a little.

"I'm sure." The older vampire nods reluctantly.

"Alright, then. I can only allow one evening, however. I don't want to risk you being trapped out there during the daytime."

"Okay." He nods and smiles a little more, patting Gawain's shoulder when he's finally done with him, "Thank you."

"Of course, my love." Will blushes at the name, still too stunned by it to say anything. Hannibal takes his boy's hand and starts walking him to the castle.

"Come, let's get you inside."

"Okay." The older vampire gets Will settled in the library, since he knows that is his favorite place to be. Will smiles softly and gets all relaxed and snuggled into some furs. Hannibal takes a seat next to him on the sofa, letting out a sigh that frees him of the tension in his bones.

"That was a long day." Will murmurs and curls up to his side. He wraps an arm around his lamb.

"Yes, it was."

"Can I sleep with you?" Hannibal nods in response.

"Of course you can, sweet boy." Will smiles and noses at his shoulder.

"In your bed?"

"Yes. In my bed," he answers with a soft chuckle.

"I've never been in your room, that's why I was asking."

"If you didn't ask tonight, I would have."

"Is it because I accepted your gift?"

"In a way, it is. I didn't want you to feel forced to accompany me to my room. I wanted it to be your choice." Will smiles a little at how sweet that is then kisses his cheek.

"I wouldn't have."

"That's certainly reassuring," he says with a smile. The lamb simply smiles, flashing his fangs a bit, then goes back to snuggling. Hannibal holds Will gently for a little while longer before scooping him up into his arms and walking to his own lavish room.

"I have legs." He jokes but just leans into him.

"Allow me to spoil you, little lamb. At least a little."

"Okay, okay." Will laughs and relaxes in his arms, enjoying being held.

"Good boy," he purrs sweetly while pressing a kiss to his head. Will blushes and huffs playfully then nuzzles his cheek and throat. A short walk later, Hannibal carries Will over the threshold of his bedroom. He lays the fledgling down gently onto his furs and velvet comforter. Will makes a happy sound at how soft everything is and rolls onto his side to curl up. This makes the older vampire chuckle softly.

“I’m assuming that means it’s to your liking, then?”

“Mhm, it’s soft,” he mumbles then looks up at Hannibal and smiles.

“I’m glad,” he responds with his own smile as he climbs into bed with Will. He holds him close, only now registering the new lack of warmth from his sweet boy. That thought makes his still heart ache a little. The lamb smiles even more and turns in his arms to face him.

“Thank you.”

“It’s my pleasure, Will.” Once he has decided he is finished with conversations for the night, Will snuggles into his chest with a small happy sigh. Hannibal pulls him closer, humming that same soft tune he knows Will loves. Inside, he is still mourning the loss of Will’s humanity, but is also finally able to relax knowing that his boy will be forever by his side.

“You’re gonna make me fall asleep,” Will mumbles with a small laugh.

“Rest, sweet boy,” he murmurs while brushing a bit of hair from Will’s face. “Dawn is approaching and you’ve had a long night.” The fledgling does not have to be told twice, almost immediately afterwards his eyes are shut and he is motionless. He looks dead and alive at the same time. Hannibal almost has to reassure himself that his lamb will wake up the next evening. With a sigh, he presses a soft kiss to the top of Will’s head before drifting off into his own fitful sleep.

When Will wakes the next evening, he slips out of Hannibal’s arms and bed then heads down the halls to the library. He had been wanting to read the book that focused on Galahad again. He grabs everything he will need for reading outside before heading to the gardens. It is one of his favorite spots to relax and just breathe when he is feeling overwhelmed. Will finds himself a nice spot and gets situated, wrapping himself up to keep warm even though he does not need to and there is no real point in doing it. He settles into reading quickly and smiles while thinking about how romantic the author is. After an hour or so he sets his book down to let his eyes rest and instead studies the flowers all around him. Some are familiar, some are dead due to not being able to survive the winter, and others he has never seen before. Though, one in particular stands out to him. Will walks over to gently run his fingertips over the petals and smiles warmly. But his smile falters when he is hit with this wave of sadness. It is not the usual kind, like when you cannot have your way or you lose something you care for. It is the kind where your heart feels hollow and your stomach drops. The kind you only feel after losing someone you love.

Will takes a moment to try and calm himself but is unsuccessful and that feeling just keeps getting worse until he is crying. He knows what plant it is. It is the kind Tristan used to leave in random places for Galahad to find: lavender.

Will has a short flash of a memory, almost like deja vu. He is with Tristan and they are resting in a field on their backs, holding each other’s hands while they stare up at the clouds. After a moment Tristan looks at him and gives one of his rare but perfect smiles, he almost sounds like he is underwater when he murmurs Galahad’s name and cups Will’s cheek. Before he can process it, Will is running inside and screaming for Tristan, tears flowing down his face while he tries his best to navigate the maze of halls with his foggy brain. He ends up collapsing somewhere and just laying down to cry. His mind cannot comprehend anything that is happening. He can only think about how their theory must be right. How he must be some reincarnation of Galahad.

Hannibal is awoken with the sound of Will’s yelling echoing through the halls. He assumes the worst, like humans storming the castle. The older vampire is racing, practically gliding

through the many corridors as he follows his scent. Though, he stops when he hears a different name being called. *Tristan*. He has not been called that in over a millennia. He can tell it is not just Will trying that name after learning of his true identity. No. There is a sort of fear and desperation in his lamb's voice. When he finally comes upon Will crumpled in one of the halls tucked away by the kitchens, he sucks in a nervous breath as he prepares to speak.

"Will? Darling, what's wrong?" The lamb cannot do much besides look up at him with the most pathetic expression. After a second holds out the lavender in cupped hands. Somehow he had managed to not crumble the petals. Hannibal tentatively reaches out to take the flower from Will's hands into one of his own. Any words he had are now lodged in his throat, firmly seated there.

"I…," he twirls the lavender sprig in his fingers, trying to process what all that means. He recalls these little pressed flowers he left on Galahad's pillow, in the saddlebag on his horse, just anywhere for him and him alone to find. "What… What does this mean, Will?"

"I-it- I- you used to-" he cannot even get the words out and just stops talking, not wanting to sound like a fool. Hannibal kneels down beside him, crimson eyes flickering between Will's clear spring one's and the soft purple hues of the flower.

"Do you," he pauses, trying to think past the growing tightness in his throat. "Do you remember where I used to leave these for you?"

"Most- mostly my bedroom but if we had to go scouting or had a mission you'd leave- you'd put them in my saddlebags." Hannibal, or perhaps Tristan, to be more precise, smiles. However, it is not one of his polite, closed-lipped ones. It is jubilant and full of teeth, fangs on full display.

"I would," he says with a nod. Will sniffles and wipes his nose then just hugs his knees to his chest.

"When I figured it out I- there was this memory of us laying in a field." Hannibal swallows and nods. If Will is recalling the memory he thinks he is, it is one of the last few happy moments that he and Galahad shared before their final missions.

"What was it like?" he asks, just wanting to be sure.

"It was sunny and we were just looking at the clouds."

"It was a nice day. One of the few warmer ones." Will nods in agreement then reaches out for Hannibal's hand. He responds by giving the fledgling's hand a gentle squeeze. "So… Do you remember your previous life as Galahad? In its entirety?" He nods again, not really able to form sentences at the moment. Hannibal cannot help embracing Will with an unrestrained adoration.

"So, you remember how I was, how I used to be." Will hugs him tight and nods, turning his head to bury his face in the crook of his neck.

"You were quiet but you were always observing."

"Indeed, I was," he starts. "For that was the entirety of my life, the purpose I was fated to serve, so to speak."

"You smiled at me, in the field." And he smiles now.

"I did."

"You never really smiled like that for anyone else." "Because you're the only one I ever wanted to smile like that for. All those centuries ago, and in this moment, you have this admirable compassion for everyone and everything dear to you. I… loved you for that, and I love you for that now." Will just stares at him for a second then looks at the floor, eyes flicking from side to side while he tries to process that. "I'm sorry. I know that must be a lot to take in," he says, an anxious lilt to his voice. Will shakes his head then leans in to kiss him gently.

“I love you, too.” It is the only phrase that can really explain what he feels for Hannibal. For Tristan, who finds himself growing emotional at Will’s profession of love. The fledgling hugs him again, pressing his face back to his throat. They stay like this for a while, with Hannibal occasionally whispering soft things to his lamb. “I need to go get my book from outside so it doesn’t get ruined.”

“Would you like me to go with you?” Will nods then stands and helps him up, feeling bad for causing a scene. He wipes the dried blood from his tears off his cheeks and takes a deep breath. Hannibal pulls him into another embrace, sweeping a bit of Will’s hair back as he places a tender kiss on his forehead. Will just relaxes into his arms and sighs softly, enjoying the comfort.

After a short while, Hannibal starts leading Will back to the gardens to retrieve the book. Will stays snuggled up to his side then starts gathering his furs and book. He watches his lamb with soft eyes, waiting for him to be ready to return to the castle. The fledgling wraps himself in his furs and hugs his book to his chest while making his way back to Hannibal, who looks down at him with a soft smile.

“Are you sure you’re alright?” Will nods and looks up at him with a small smile. The older vampire then nods and starts ushering Will back inside.

“Come along now. I’ll help you prepare for tomorrow’s journey.” He nods and rests against his side with a soft sound.

“I need a bath.”

“I’ll run one for you, then.”

“Thank you,” he mumbles and sighs softly, hugging his book tighter while thinking about how it is technically about Hannibal and himself.

“Of course, sweet boy,” he replies, a bit concerned about Will since he seems rather reserved. The lamb just presses himself closer to Hannibal, wanting to get into some hot water and relax. He leads Will back into the stone corridors of their home, walking until they return to Hannibal’s room. After making sure the fledgling is comfortably sitting on the bed, Hannibal goes about preparing the bath. Will takes this time to undress and prepare for his bath, making sure to fold his clothes and set them somewhere in a neat pile.

Hannibal is sitting on a cushioned stool, dropping relaxing scents and oils into the warm water by the time Will enters. The older vampire offers him another one of his small smiles.

“Your bath is ready, sweet boy.”

“Thank you.” He dips his head a little then moves to slip into the water with a long, happy groan.

“How is it?” Hannibal asks while pulling his seat closer to the tub. “Not too hot, I hope.”

“Mm mm, it’s perfect.” Will hums happily and slips down so only his head is out of the water. He nods, reaching in to caress his lamb’s cheek, “You know you can bathe with me if you want. You probably need to.”

“Do you want me in there with you?” he asks with a little head tilt.

“I’d enjoy it, yes.” With a chuckle, Hannibal proceeds to undress, folding and placing his clothes on a small set of drawers as he goes. After a moment or two, he is fully nude and slips into the bath behind Will with a contented sigh. The younger vampire smiles and leans back into his chest, feeling a little better now. Hannibal massages his lamb’s arms and shoulders, wanting him to be as relaxed as possible. Will sighs happily and grins, letting his head fall back to rest on Hannibal’s shoulder, who turns his head to press a kiss to Will’s cheek.

“How are you feeling?”

“Great,” he mumbles and licks his lips.

“I’m glad to hear that darling.” Will shushes him because has a tendency to be a brat like

that then stretches. Hannibal just chuckles at that and wraps his arms around the fledgling's waist, pulling him close.

"Will you come with me tomorrow?" Will asks after a few minutes of soaking up affection.

"As much as I'd love to, I think it's for the best that you make the journey alone."

"They can't hurt you, Hell, they may even be happy that you spared me."

"I don't know, love. As I said before, they're not exactly accepting of us. I'm only tolerated because I offer protection." Will is silent for a moment but eventually speaks.

"Do you think they'll hate me now?" Hannibal thinks about it for a moment before shaking his head.

"I believe they likely won't. They know you. They'll be afraid of the new unknowns, yes, but they won't hate you." The lamb nods and sighs softly. "I, on the other hand, wouldn't exactly be welcome. Regardless, I'm sure your family misses you dearly."

"Yeah, maybe. But to them I was kind of just the cow you raised to be used as food later on." Will did not even know he was thinking that before he said it, it just kind of came out. Hannibal swallows, grimacing a little at that notion.

"That doesn't mean they didn't care for you, Will."

"Why would they give me up so willingly if they did?" His sire stays quiet for a moment, feeling at fault.

"Because of me," he answers bluntly, the bitter taste of guilt on his tongue. Will shakes his head then closes his eyes and turns a bit to rest his head on Hannibal's chest.

"Please don't blame yourself." Hannibal nods, but not in agreement.

"But I am to blame, at least to some degree. It's my fault that all those men and women were sent here to die by my hand. That you were sent here for the same purpose."

"It doesn't matter. I don't blame you, so it doesn't matter."

"It matters in the sense of how your townsfolk would feel about me. They don't see me like I've let you see me."

"Sounds like their problem."

"I will not travel with you, little lamb. They trust you more than I." Will frowns but nods, he was really hoping Hannibal would say yes. Hannibal feels absolutely awful about that. He knows he is just letting his own fears and concerns get in the way of Will's happiness, but they are not something he can easily push out of his mind.

"I'm sorry, Will."

"It's fine, I get it." Hannibal, not wanting to press the matter further, just holds Will close. Will huffs and just stays still, not wanting to talk anymore. The rest of their bath goes relatively smoothly. Afterwards, they get ready for bed and, as promised, Hannibal assists Will in getting prepared for his trip back to the village. Hannibal does not want to worry, but he counts a million and ten ways of how this could go wrong. Yes, that is obviously an exaggeration, but Will's sire is absolutely fretting over letting his lamb leave his sight.

When he has finished, Will slips out of his sleep clothes and into bed. He does not see a point in sleeping in clothes, they make him feel like he is going to get tangled in fabric and suffocate. Without another word, Hannibal climbs into his bed with him. He tentatively wraps his arms around Will and pulls him close, just needing to know he is near. Will lays still for a moment then rolls over to wrap his arms around his sire's waist, pulling him closer. And with that, they fall into a peaceful sleep.

Hannibal wakes just before the sun has fully set. He lays there for a little while, relaxing in Will's arms. After a few moments, Hannibal goes about gently waking his lamb.

“Love? It’s time to get up. You have a long journey ahead.” The lamb shifts to hide his face in the pillows with a small sound of irritation, not ready to get up. Will’s sire lets out a soft chuckle. “What would be an incentive to get up?” he asks teasingly. Will hums and turns his head a bit to look at him with one of those smiles that makes your knees wobble. And if Hannibal were standing, his legs would be quaking.

“You could start with a kiss.” The older vampire complies, taking Will’s cheeks in his hands before pressing a sweet yet fervent kiss to his lips. Before long, tongues meet and teeth clash. Will moans softly and pulls Hannibal onto himself. The older vampire lets out a little laugh into the kiss.

“I have an inkling that you might not be getting out of bed anytime soon, if you’re not careful.”

“I think staying in bed is the more pleasurable choice.”

“Of course you do,” he purrs. “But you have your trip today.” Will huffs and buries his face back in the pillows then whines. Hannibal hums out a laugh. He knows the next words out of his mouth are just to spoil his sweet boy. “Well, I suppose we can spare a few moments.” That has the fledgling smirking and rolling back onto his back.

“What a spoiled boy you are,” he teases as he crawls over top of Will, caging him with his arms. Will smirks and cups his cheeks, pulling him down for a kiss. Hannibal eagerly kisses him back while enjoying this bit of intimacy. After a moment, Will pulls away and licks his lips.

“I’m only spoiled because you allow it.” The older vampire huffs out a laugh.

“That may be true. Though, I treasure you far too much to do anything else.”

“Oh so I’m receiving premium treatment?” Hannibal responds with a nod, chuckling to himself.

“That you are, sweet boy.” Will grins then nuzzles his face.

“I love you.”

“I love you, too, my darling boy,” he murmurs before resuming their kisses, running his hands along Will’s body as he does so. The lamb sighs happily, pressing up into his hands and whining softly. Hannibal then trails his kisses down to his lamb’s throat, letting his fangs just barely prick the porcelain-esque skin. Will tips his head back to give his sire more room and reaches up to run his fingers through his hair, pulling his head closer to his skin. That elicits a purring sort of laugh out of the older vampire.

“My beautiful boy,” he hums. Will huffs and hides his face, still not liking when he is being teased. That just makes Hannibal chuckle more as he traverses further south, strong hands kneading the soft flesh of his lamb’s hips as he teases one of Will’s nipples with his mouth and tongue.

“You-you really like doing that, don’t you?” He asks and swallows while arching into his mouth, “You’ve done-done it both times.”

“I know it brings you pleasure. How could I not enjoy it?” he responds, not once ceasing his “care”.

“I just- it’s a bit weird?” Will whines softly and bites his lip.

“Would you like me to stop?”

“N-no, please don’t stop.” His sire chuckles.

“Then you needn’t worry about a single thing, sweet boy. Just let me take care of you.” The lamb nods and swallows then sighs through his nose and lets his muscles loosen. Hannibal then goes about doing what he does best: giving Will pleasure. They proceed to romp around in the sheets for much more than a “few moments”, like the sire had mentioned earlier.

After a few hours have passed, the older vampire then prompts the younger to get out of bed and prepare for his trip. Will sighs and gets up, stretching big then going to get dressed and ready. He wants to look good for his family so he decides to wear one of the finer outfits Hannibal had gotten him. The sire lets out a soft hum as he gets redressed, his eyes raking over Will's frame in all of its silken and gilded glory.

"You look lovely."

"I'm glad you think so, I want them to know I'm being cared for." Hannibal smiles at the thought.

"I certainly hope that is what is gleaned from your visit." Will smiles back then comes over to kiss him gently, straightening Hannibal's hair a bit while he does.

"I promise to be home before dawn."

"I'll hold you to your word," he responds with a small chuckle. It is a nervous one, but he does his best not to show it on his face. Will gives him one last smile and nod then heads out, excited for his visit home.

Saddling Gawain takes him nearly no time now. He has gotten to where he can be ready in less than three minutes. He mounts his steed and taps him into a gallop, not wanting to waste any time. He is ready to go home.

End of chapter six.

Chapter End Notes

Hannibal is one for dramatics, isn't he? I can't say I blame him.

The Return of the Prodigal Son

Chapter Summary

Will visits his family to see them one last time. Hannibal struggles with figuring out how to spend the evening on his own…

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Hannibal watches Will leave through one of his many windows, silently praying for his safe return. Once his lamb is out of sight, he turns with a sigh before lazily strolling through the halls. He had gotten so used to having Will alongside him that he had forgotten how dreadfully boring it is to be alone. He had forgotten how the chill of loneliness creeps up his spine, leaving him with a hollow sensation in his chest.

"Be safe," he murmurs into the empty space around him before turning away from the window. Everything could go wrong, but it also could not. Hannibal tells himself to be optimistic and, before he knows it, his lamb will return home. Return to him, where he will be safe from the horrors of the world.

It takes less than an hour for Will to reach his village. He slows Gawain into a walk and smiles softly. Hopefully, his family will still be awake when he arrives. Will hates to admit that he had missed them as much as he has. When he reaches his childhood home Will dismounts and hitches Gawain to a nearby post and unsaddles him, wanting his boy to be comfortable. Will takes a deep breath and stares at their door for a moment before knocking.

By the time Will has reached his childhood home, Hannibal is slumped back in his favorite chair in the lounge, lazily eyeing the fire in his hearth. He feels surprisingly empty now that Will is not there to keep him company. There will never be enough firewood or bottles of vintage wine in the world that could ever come close to amounting to the joy he feels in his lamb's presence. Hannibal considers taking a stroll in the gardens to take his mind off of things, but he does not think he could stomach a lonely walk. Especially when the trees are bare and the flowers are lifeless after countless frosts in the dead of winter.

After what could be hours or mere minutes of sulking in his comfortable chair, he decides to seek comfort in the library, wanting to be surrounded by the very books Will holds dear. He walks along the various bookshelves, occasionally brushing his fingertips along the wood. Every now and then, the vampire lets out a soft sigh. Hannibal does his best to be happy for Will, happy that he gets to see his family again after all these months. However, the thought does nothing to stop him from thinking of every possible way Will could come to harm. He is especially worried about how the villagers may react to Will's return, considering he is no longer human. With a groan, he does his best to chase those thoughts away. After all, he

could be wrong about the villagers. They could be very nice and understanding people. Surely Will was a product of a compassionate upbringing, right? Hannibal nods affirmatively at the thought.

"Yes, that must be it," he muses to himself. His little lamb is just so empathetic and genuine. While that may just be his personality, someone must have cultivated that. With another nod, Hannibal does his best to clear his mind of his fears and buries his nose in a random book, thinking mostly of Will instead of its philosophical contents.

Will smiles brightly when his mother answers the door and laughs a little when she squeezes him in a tight hug. Maybe Hannibal had been right about them caring about him. When he is done greeting everyone they sit and talk. Will explains what his life has been like for the past year or so and tells them that he is well taken care of. He has never wanted for anything the whole time he has been in Hannibal's care. Unless it is for… less appropriate reasons.

Although they are happy, his parents are on edge. Will can tell by how they shift in their seats and how his father's lips are drawn in a tight line when he is not talking. He decides to ignore it and continues their conversation until he is almost certain that it is time to leave. He had promised Hannibal he would be home before dawn, after all. He says his goodbyes to his family and stands to leave, but freezes up when he feels that something is wrong. That is when he hears the first scream of the night rip through their once peaceful village.

At that time, Hannibal found himself much too restless to sit still in one place. He had since exited the library and went back to strolling about the halls. It has been far too long since his lamb left. Will's sire finds himself worrying about every possible way something could have gone wrong.

When his front entrance is thrown open and two familiar, though still uninvited, scents permeate the air, he knows something is certainly amiss.

"Hannibal!" a female voice calls out. He knows exactly who it is, now he can put a voice to a scent. It is Lady Verger. The second scent must be Alana, he assumes as he makes his way to the foyer.

"Margot, Alana. What is the purpose for this visit? Uninvited and so close to dawn, too."

"It's Mason," she states, throwing off the hood of her inky black cloak, "He's gone to the village of our newest member."

"He has a sort of interest in Will," Alana adds in a soft voice, concern coloring her words. Hannibal feels the unmoving blood in his veins turn to ice.

"And you've come to inform me that Lord Verger intends to slaughter the remnants of Will's past to garner his attention?" Hannibal knows he need not ask, but clarification would be beneficial, regardless.

"And much more, if he isn't stopped," Margot replies. That is all Hannibal needs to hear. He hastily goes about collecting everything he may need to face Mason, including an instance of single combat. Before long, he mounts Lancelot and rides into the night, hoping he is not too late.

End of chapter seven.

Chapter End Notes

You thought Hannibal was dramatic? Mason IS the drama.

Short chapter this time, folks. Only this once, however! It will pick up again in the next chapter, I promise.

The Fall of the Damned

Chapter Summary

A vampire raiding party from an opposing region ravages Will's village. Hannibal is blamed and believed to have not followed through with their centuries old deal. Will has to decide whether to save himself, or risk everything to rescue Hannibal…

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Will has spent the last ten minutes hiding his family and making sure they are safe from any danger. Even his father, who had argued for a majority of the time they spoke. Once he is done, he makes his way to the door and opens it a hair for him to see out of. Massacre is the only word that can describe what he is witnessing. Will swallows and glances to where Gawain is hitched then makes a dash for him. Rather than leaving his family he sets his horse free, slapping his behind so he will get a move on.

Will then goes back into his home and starts to pull anything he can in front of the door. He may have been taught many things in his time with Hannibal but fighting was not one of them.

Hannibal arrives at the village, seeing what he can only describe as the beginnings of a bloodbath. Mason is nowhere in sight, but he can see countless other vampires devouring and mutilating the poor, unsuspecting humans. A raiding party. He is unsure as to which one of these homes is Will's, so he goes about liberating all of them of their assailants. It feels odd wielding a blade after so long, but it still feels right and natural. As though the weighty bit of steel were simply an extension of his arm. It never occurred to Hannibal that he would ever have to confront one of the most powerful vampire lords in the nation, be it directly or by cutting down his loyal drones.

"Mason," he howls, the metaphorical beast tearing its way through his human visage while he drops the decapitated head of his most recent foe, "Come out and face me!"

There is no answer, not right away, much to Hannibal's dismay. Will stiffens at hearing such a familiar voice. He thinks a long moment before shoving the various pieces of furniture out of the way and running out on to what could only be called a battlefield at this point.

"Hannibal!"

He is standing in place, his cloak long since shed, leaving his once pristine shirt sleeves soaked with blood. His eyes dance wildly about his surroundings as he searches for any signs of Lord Verger. It takes a short while for him to register that Will had called out to him. When he finally does, he turns and rushes over to him, dropping his sword as he pulls his lamb into a strong embrace.

"Will, my darling. Are you alright?" he asks, barely above a whisper. Will nods and hugs him back, burying his face in the crook of his neck. Hannibal rests his chin on Will's shoulder, his eyes closing as he takes in the fact that Will is unharmed and safe in his arms. The sweet moment is cut short by a scent carried along by the breeze. It is dominant,

overconfident. His head snaps up to follow the source of the smell, only to find it is none other than Mason Verger at last. Will follows his gaze, hand resting on Hannibal's chest as he stares the opposing lord down. Hannibal bends down to reclaim his weapon and tucks Will behind himself.

"I knew you could be greedy, Mason, but I never expected you to orchestrate something this self-indulgent," the older of the three growls out. Lord Verger throws his head back as he barks out a string of laughter.

"Really? Come now, you're an observant man. You would've known exactly why I did this even without my dear sister and her pet tattling." Crimson eyes follow gold ones as Mason walks a lap around the two of them.

"Perhaps I would have. Though, it's much more satisfying to know you have no loyalty within your own inner circle," he says with a small smirk. He wants Mason to make the first move, to make a mistake in anger that would make Hannibal's time ridding the world of Lord Verger all the more pleasurable. Will stays tucked behind him, gripping the back of Hannibal's vest.

His attempt at goading the other lord seemed to be effective, as Mason shrugged off his fur-lined coat and tossed it unceremoniously into the bloody mud. Though, if Lord Verger is frustrated, his face does not show it. In fact, he looks more entertained than anything.

"How's this: Hand the fledgling over, and you can live out the rest of your days as you always have been." That elicits an amused smile from Hannibal.

"I have no intention of giving anyone to you. I'm sure you're well aware of that." Will swallows, thinking about their options. If he turns himself in all of this could end so quickly. Unfortunately for Will, Hannibal does not give him a chance to act or speak. Sword in hand, he makes his way over to Lord Verger.

"You may only have Will if you defeat me in combat. Just you and me. No other assistance." He looks down at Mason, expecting an answer at this very moment. The golden-eyed vampire agrees with a cocky grin. Hannibal, as experienced in war as he is, knows Lord Verger is not likely to succeed. Will does all he can in this situation and gets out of the way but stays close enough to watch.

It does not take long for them to start their duel. The sound of steel rings out in the village square as their swords clash. The lamb feels sick to his stomach and has to stop himself from running out to help. Even if he was capable, this is Hannibal's fight. Mason Verger is a decent swordsman, Hannibal must admit. Though, he fights like he speaks: well, but without thinking. The sanguine-eyed vampire decides there is no point in wasting time toying with his opponent. He would rather not give him the chance to make a well-timed strike. Lord Verger missteps while thrusting his blade and Hannibal takes the opportunity to kick him down. Without any pomp and circumstance, he hoists Mason up by his hair and relieves him of the burden of having a head. Hannibal tosses it to the ground without another word.

His fledgling sprints over and wraps him in the tightest hug he has probably ever given, pressing his face to his chest while apologizing for ever asking to visit his home. Hannibal returns the embrace, consoling Will as best he can.

"It's alright, love. It's not your fault," he whispers. He is too focused on his lamb to notice the villagers tentatively peering out of their doors and windows at the silence resulting from Hannibal's battle. One by one, they leave the safety of their homes. Will sniffles and pulls away just a bit only for him to kiss Hannibal hard and strong. He is overcome with joy because his sire lived.

He drops his blade once more, about to return the kiss when he is yanked away. Caught completely off guard, Hannibal is easily forced to his knees and bound with rope. He growls

like a wounded animal when it burns worse than fire, noting that someone must have soaked it in holy water from the nearby church. Will lunges forward to help but gets yanked back. He wants to cry, but instead snarls and tries to break free. He is not successful and his efforts only get him surrounded by more people, who are saying things like ’You’re home now‘ and ‘He can’t hurt you’.

Hannibal does not bother fighting back more than just the normal attempts at escaping the pain. Hannibal does not bother defending himself against this injustice and the accusations of massacring the village to gain the Verger territory. He knew this would happen. He knew the villagers would never accept him. What he did not know, however, is that they were not going to treat him any better than a rabid beast, dragging him along to someplace strong enough to contain him. The lamb does his best to get free and back to Hannibal, but every attempt to get free fails. Even when he starts snapping his teeth and snarling, the villagers will not let him go. Hannibal manages to halt his imprisonment long enough to call out to Will.

“Behave yourself, sweet boy,” he says with a smile, but there is no warmth behind it. Love for Will, yes, but also fear and heartache from being torn away from his lamb. Will does as he is told, making a sound that can only be compared to an animal in pain. He cannot think of words to say right now, he can barely think at all. He fears that he may never be able to make this right.

Before long, Hannibal is kept in what he can only describe as a hut just outside of the village. It is on a barren hill, holes in the roofing that allow for the rose-hued light of dawn to creep in. Hannibal is strung up like a caricature of Christ, wrists slit to drain him of his lifeblood. He and the villagers all know the current conditions would not kill him. He would only be left significantly weakened, powerless to fight back, if he so chooses. Will is taken back to his family’s home and stuffed into his room.

He stands there for a moment, sniffling and digging his nails into his palms. He had gotten Hannibal locked away because he wanted to visit people who never cared for him, people who thought he was nothing more than a child. Even now they have locked him in his room while they discuss “grown up” things. Will growls and grabs the nearest thing he can and flings it into a wall. He takes a few deep breaths to try and calm himself down, but it fails. The next hour is spent destroying everything in his room, except for the bookshelf in the corner. Poor Will. Poor Hannibal. Neither of them had asked to be in this situation. Neither of them had asked Mason to further jeopardize their kind. What can either of them do now?

There is only one thing Will *can* do. He has to get out of this hut. That is the first priority. So, he starts searching and trying to find something useful. He could climb out the window, but if the villagers are smart enough they will be guarding it. His next option is to sneak his way out once everyone is sleeping, but there is no telling how long it will take them to settle down now. The fledgling makes a frustrated sound then plops down in his bed. Maybe he could try to escape during the day when no one will expect it. He will just have to make sure his skin is covered.

Meanwhile, Hannibal is absolutely miserable. Not because of the uncomfortable position, nor the growing thirst that makes his teeth itch now that a fair bit of blood has been drained from him, however, but from how he desperately misses his lamb. He knows Will is likely safe, at least to some degree, since he was not brought here alongside him. The sire does not even care that he is being blamed for the now late Lord Verger’s impulsivity. He just wants to see Will. To feel his touch and assuage his fears. He would give everything for just one moment with him.

That next morning, Will finds himself dragging the blankets off his bed to use as some type of hooded cloak. He found some old twine to tie it together and hold in place so he can run if he needs to. Will thinks for a moment about how he had never been the best at strategizing and how this ability could be something he retained from his days as Galahad. Though, he does not give that too much more thought, as he feels there are more important matters at hand. Once he finishes, he drapes the heavy fabric over himself and pulls the hood up over his head, huffing when it makes it difficult to see.

As Will manages to slip outside he has to hold back a hiss when the sun manages to catch his skin and sting him, he pulls his hood down farther and looks at the dirt while walking through the small village. He knows where Hannibal is being kept and power walks to the edge of the homes and onto the small trail that goes through the forest to the small hut. He sprints once he is far enough away from the village to not be seen and makes sure to keep his head covered. When he reaches the small shelter he slams into the door and closes it behind him with as much force as he can, already feeling weak from not feeding after his transformation.

Hannibal half expects any disturbances to be more villagers coming to torment him, or small animals that have made their homes in and on the dilapidated hut. Eventually, he comes to the conclusion that the villagers do not intend to torture him by any means. They intend to wait until he is weak and starving enough for their liking to be slain. It is a small bit of solace, but that does not mean the sting of indignity lessens one bit. Hannibal knows, vows even, if given the slightest chance, he would devour them all for that reason alone. To save himself and kill them all.

He does not even have to look up to know who has come to visit him. Even though it is weak, the scent is inherently Will. That alone put his mind at ease as soon as it graced his olfactory nerves.

“Hello, Will,” he manages to whisper with a weak smile. The lamb does not waste any time lunging forward to untie his love, making sure he is as gentle as can be with his burned and cut wrists.

“It’s okay, I promise everything will be okay,” Will whispers while sinking to the floor and holding Hannibal in his lap, who does his best to wrap his arms around him. The sire buries his face in Will’s shoulder, practically drinking in his scent greedily. They were only apart briefly, but it still felt like an eternity. Will rests his chin on the older vampire’s head while squeezing him and rocking a little. He had never seen the man look so lifeless, at least not so far in his lifetime as Will. The only time he had seen him look this bad was when he died as Tristan.

“Let’s leave, darling,” he murmurs. “It is clear neither of us can stay here.” Will simply nods, hugging him again. He had been scared he may never see his sire again. He shuts his eyes and pulls his lamb as close as he possibly can, now knowing how quickly he could be without Will.

“I’m sorry for ever asking to come back,” Will murmurs with his face now pressed to Hannibal’s neck, taking deep and slow breaths.

“It’s alright. You didn’t foresee this happening.” The lamb pulls away and looks his face over before grabbing his cheeks and pulling him into a long and slow kiss.

“I was so scared.”

“So was I.”

“I thought I’d be alone again.”

“I would never let that happen, love,” he says while nosing at Will’s hair. “Never.”

“That doesn’t mean it couldn’t have.” He is basically clinging to Hannibal at this point, “We need to f-feed. I’m so thirsty.”

“I know, my little lamb. In due time,” Hannibal answers. He knows they are both too weak to stay out of danger, let alone fight their way out of it. They will have to be smart about this.

“They’ll notice I’m gone soon.”

“I know. Perhaps you should return to them. I’ve turned out to be far more trouble for you than I ever could have imagined.” Will makes a concerned sort of choking sound at that and pulls away to look him in the eyes.

“No. I’m not doing this without you again. We’re getting out of here. Together.” He is staring at his sire like he has lost his mind and for the first time in his life he feels an emotion that is something like anger, but also distress. Hannibal lets out a defeated sigh, knowing once Will has made a decision, there is no convincing him otherwise. So, the sire just nods in response.

“What do you intend to do?”

“Well… the only thing we can do is find a place to hide.”

“Do you have a suitable place in mind?” he asks with a sort of tension in his voice. Hannibal knows whatever Will suggests will not be easy, given how weak they both are. He just hopes the fledgling has a well thought out plan, or else they will never make it. Will bites his lip, he honestly had not really thought about it all too much. He does his best to remember the lay of the land from the few times he was allowed out. Then, something comes to mind and he makes a thoughtful sound.

“There’s a cave near the river which isn’t too far from here. I doubt anyone goes there.” The older vampire nods again.

“Then that’s where we’ll go.” Will nods and takes the makeshift cloak off for a moment since the fabric was starting to feel heavy. Throwing propriety out of the window, Hannibal practically crawls into Will’s lap again, needing to bask in his presence for just a short while longer. And, for a minute, it feels like everything is alright in the world again. Will freezes for half a second then wraps him up in his arms and strokes his hair back to straighten it.

“We should wait until the sun sets.”

“We should. It won’t do either of us any good to sustain more injuries.” The lamb nods and grabs his cloak, draping it over Hannibal in some attempt to help comfort him more. It is a good choice on Will’s part, since the sire melts into his boy. After a moment Will decides to lay down so they can both rest. He unties the cloak to use properly as a blanket and holds Hannibal as close as he possibly can.

The eldest of the two shuts his eyes, feeling the weight of fatigue pressing down on him. His mouth and throat feel like sandpaper, no longer able to forget the thirst gnawing at him. Hannibal tells himself that he and his lamb will feed soon as he succumbs to a fitful slumber. Will however cannot sleep. He has not slept since he was last in the castle, in his home. He keeps watch and rubs his sire’s back in hopes of helping calm him. Will is fighting every instinct telling him to dig his teeth into Hannibal’s throat and take what little amount of blood is left. Unaware of Will’s plight, the eldest vampire is the most relaxed he has been throughout this whole ordeal, his brow no longer furrowed in pain. The lamb sighs and closes his eyes to get some sleep and rest, knowing he will need it for their walk to the cave.

Hannibal is the first to wake. He can see stars peaking through the holes in the roofing and heaves a sigh of relief, glad the sun is no longer up to add to either of their wounds. Will stays pressed against his side, not wanting to move from his spot. He does open his eyes,

though, and follows Hannibal's gaze to look at the stars. He feels like he has done this before. He knows he watched the clouds with Tristan all those years ago. So they had probably been stargazing a few times too. The sire turns his head in Will's direction. Seeing that he is awake, he offers his lamb a smile.

"Hello, love."

"Hi," he mumbles and smiles back, still waking up.

"We should leave soon. They're likely looking for you already." Will sighs and nods while sitting up to rub his eyes and face. Hannibal comes up into a sitting position with a soft groan, hoping the cave is not too far. He has regained some energy just by resting, but they both still need to feed before any real recovery can be made.

"Are you okay?" Will reaches out to cup his cheeks with a frown, "You can drink from me if you need to, they almost drained you." He shakes his head in response.

"You're not faring much better yourself. I'll be alright."

"You're definitely in worse shape than me."

"Will," he starts in an almost warning tone, "you needn't worry about me." The lamb looks at his hands which are fisting his shirt at this point.

"Fine. I won't then."

"Thank you, darling." Hannibal lets out a soft huff, glad that he will hopefully not be too much of a burden now. Will is just worried. He is worried about his sire and if he will be able to make the walk without getting caught. They will make it, they just have to. At least, that is what Hannibal tells himself as they rise to their feet, supporting each other's weight. Will does his best to hold Hannibal close, knowing he needs more help than himself.

They carefully make their way out of the hut and into the forest, hastily heading for the cave Will spoke of. He knows the way better than Hannibal, so he relies on his lamb to get them there safely. Will is shaking while leading them to what's going to be their home for a while, when they arrive he helps Hannibal climb up since it is a bit slippery.

"Thank you, Will," he says almost breathlessly as he sits down, feeling oddly faint after their trek.

"Of course." Will nods and takes a seat next to him, panting then leaning back to lay down. The sire hugs his knees to his chest, doing his best to think past his hunger and plan for the long term.

Will licks his lips and swallows thickly, "I'm-I'm so thirsty it hurts."

"I know, my love, I know. We'll likely have to sustain ourselves on animals for the time being." Hannibal has to bite his tongue to stave off a shudder at that distasteful thought. His lamb simply curls in on himself and hugs his belly, feeling terrible. "Maybe any occasional passerby's, too," Hannibal muses, mostly to himself.

"Anything but this, please."

"I promise you, you won't go hungry, darling." Will nods and sighs softly, he knows Hannibal means it but does not know if he can provide what he is promising. Hannibal is not sure if he can, either. But for the next few weeks, he spends most of his time hunting and bringing back animals for his lamb.

Once they are both clearly on the mend, Hannibal starts looking for any humans who were unfortunate enough to traverse through this neck of the woods. He could barely contain himself the first time he found one, tearing into their flesh to gorge himself on every last drop of blood. With his strength slowly but surely returning to him, he hatches a plan to lure unsuspecting victims to the cave, so Will can have his first taste of human blood.

The lamb is currently in their cave, wasting time while braiding his hair in little sections since it had gotten longer and has started to annoy him. The eldest of the two, with a bit of his

power of persuasion, made it seem as though Will is in dire need of assistance and they needed to follow him to their shelter right away. It is far too easy to bring someone so gullible to his boy that he almost feels bad for them. Almost. Will makes a small sound when he smells humans before he sees one. He stands and glances around then grins when he sees Hannibal with fresh food.

"I have a surprise for you, little lamb," Hannibal says with a barely suppressed grin, despite Will's food catching on to his bluff. Unfortunately for the poor human, the younger vampire is faster and lunges to sink his fangs into the man's neck before he even has the chance to run. He does this quickly, not wanting to prolong the pain. Will pets his prey and holds him gently while he drains him of his life. The sire feels a sort of unforeseen satisfaction, nourishment even, whilst watching his lamb listen to his instincts, becoming a predator.

When he finishes, Will pulls away and kisses the man's cheek, feeling like he owes it to him. Then, he sits up and wipes his mouth with the back of his arm then stands. Hannibal is smiling at him.

"I'm sure you feel much better now, hmm?"

"Mhm." He nods then walks over to kiss him lovingly. The sire returns the favor with a soft hum. Will wraps his arms around his neck and leans away so he can see Hannibal's face, "What now?"

"Now we wait. Build up our strength so we can safely return home." Will nods and hugs him tight.

"I love you." That phrase elicits a soft hum from the taller vampire.

"I love you, too."

"Prove it."

"I brought you fresh prey. How else would I prove my love for you?" he asks with a playful smile. Will smirks and pulls him closer, backing himself into a wall.

"You know how." Hannibal chuckles. "I see that now, you insatiable boy." With another hum, he presses himself as close as he can to his lamb. Will giggles and hops up, wrapping his legs around his waist. With a sound akin to a purr, he nuzzles the younger vampire's throat.

"Mmm, love when you do that, Han."

"I know," he replies with a low chuckle before nipping at his skin. Will cannot stop himself from moaning, arching his back and letting his head fall backwards. They end up making love in their den, with Hannibal taking Will against the cave wall. It is wild, animalistic even, brimming with desperation as they chase after the height of pleasure time and time again. The only thing missing is their home. And Hannibal is determined to reclaim it as they embrace one another on the stone floor of their shelter. Will is smiling and tracing shapes into his sire's chest, finally satisfied in every way possible.

While relaxed and feeling sated, Hannibal, on the other hand, cannot ignore the anger that has been simmering away in his chest throughout their stay here, slowly growing into a rolling boil. The humiliation he suffered at their hands sealed their fates. He would give the villagers exactly what they deserve.

And he would enjoy every second of it.

End of chapter eight.

Chapter End Notes

Hannibal does not have good intention for those poor villagers. The last chapter on Saturday!

Primavera (Finale)

Chapter Summary

It's spring before the sire's strength returns to him. Having been stripped of his pride and dignity by the villagers, Hannibal finally does away with the deal and goes on a rampage fueled by bloodlust. Will has one final test to prove his devotion to Hannibal…

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Time passes and the last frosts of winter slowly fade from memory. Hannibal can almost taste the bright scent of new life as it floats on a warm spring breeze. Will is sitting at the entrance of their cave, head tipped back while he enjoys the smell of spring. Hannibal soon joins him, sitting at his side with a small sigh.

"Can we go home now?" The sire nods solemnly.

"I believe so."

"You don't seem too happy about that."

"Believe me, I am. I'm simply thinking about how we'd be going back to protecting people who've proven they don't respect us, regardless of what we've done and would continue to do." Will sighs softly and hugs his knees to his chest.

"We don't have to protect them."

"I made a deal, one they chose not to honor. How they behaved was discourteous. And discourtesy is unspeakably ugly to me."

"They didn't even let you talk." Hannibal lets out a huff while remembering every minute detail of his imprisonment.

"You're right, they did not." Will sighs and curls up to his side a little. "But it's alright. Soon enough they won't have to worry about seeing either of us ever again."

"Are we running away?"

"No," he answers simply. Will leaves the conversation there, deciding to stay snuggled up. Hannibal remains near his lamb for a while, just enjoying his presence overall.

"I can't wait to be able to lay in the library again."

"And you'll be able to, in due time." The lamb nods and sighs.

"What're we going to do then? Since we can't go home yet."

"We'll be going home. There'll just be more blood first." Will frowns at that and it almost reminds him of his last fight as Galahad. He pulls away a little then stands to go back into their cave and curl up in the small sleeping spots they had used leaves and grass to make. Hannibal, a bit concerned, follows after him.

"Is something wrong, my love?"

"I don't want to lose you again. The last time it happened it tore me apart." Will sounds almost like a different person. He feels broken.

"You won't lose me, Will. I promise."

"You seemed confident you'd be okay last time, too."

“Last time?” Hannibal thinks back for a moment, only needing a few moments before realizing Will meant his past life as Tristan. “Oh.”

He *had* been rather confident before and while in battle against the Saxons. But these villagers are not seasoned warriors like they were. They had only captured him because he was caught by surprise and did not fight back. Will simply curls in on himself, feeling like his motionless heart is sinking into his stomach as he recalls the memories of his past life.

“I promise you, no harm will befall either of us this time.”

“Lay with me, please?”

“Of course, darling,” he answers while curling up behind his boy. Hannibal drapes an arm over his waist, holding him close. Will leans back into his chest and closes his eyes, wanting to rest with him a while longer before they carry out their plan. And the eldest vampire welcomes that idea, taking advantage of every moment to be by his lamb’s side.

“Do you ever wonder what would’ve happened if you had lived?” He nods in response.

“Often.”

“What would you have done after the war?”

“I probably would’ve returned home, assuming I had a home to go back to. I would’ve missed you, however.” Will nods, he was almost hoping he would get a different answer. Hannibal lets out a soft hum, a wistful look in his eyes.

“I still wonder what would’ve happened if… if I had told you my feelings back then.”

The lamb smiles sadly, he does not know why he is sad. He simply is. “Maybe we would have gone home together.”

“Maybe,” he muses with a soft hum. “And we could’ve gone on our own adventure.”

“I think, more than anything, I would’ve liked to see your home.” Will smiles at that and huffs a little before rolling over to face his sire.

“It wasn’t that interesting. Just a couple of huts in a field.”

“It’s where you spent most of your childhood back then. It would’ve been interesting to me.” Will smiles even more while pressing a gentle kiss to his lips.

“You’re so sweet.” Hannibal smiles genuinely for the first time in a long while.

“I only speak the truth, my love.”

“I know, you don’t lie.”

“Precisely,” he says with a little mirthful expression. Will lays there thinking for a moment, drawing shapes on Hannibal’s chest like he always does. After a minute or so he speaks up.

“If you had known about my feelings would you have tried harder to survive?” The sire’s once jovial smile melts away.

“What are you saying?”

“I’m asking…” He sighs and bites his lip, “If I had told you that you were my reason for living, would you have tried harder?” Hannibal licks his lips, his tongue flicking out for the briefest of seconds, almost like a serpent testing the air. He cannot help but interpret Will’s meaning as one of doubt. How could he not have known that his, no, *Tristan’s* own reason for fighting and ultimately dying for their freedom was for him? For Galahad?

“Do… Do you not think that I tried my absolute hardest to get back to you?”

“You said before that you wouldn’t want to see anyone from your past because it would only cause you pain.” He shakes his head before responding.

“I meant when I was still human. When I still had hot blood coursing through my veins. I fought with everything I had to survive. It may not have been enough for me in the end, but I had hoped it was for you. Wasn’t it?” Hannibal’s question slips past his lips with a quivering desperation, the sort in which you feel you are unsure if you actually want to know the

answer. Will stares at him with eyes that do not really say much, they just glance over his face and flick back and forth.

"At the time, I hated you for leaving me. I wanted to kill you myself. To me it felt like you wanted to die. Especially when all I could think about was what you said that night we were supposed to go home."

'*We're all going to die some day. If it's a death from a Saxon hand that frightens you, stay home.'*

Those words echo in his mind as though he were housed in a church belfry at noon. He could not forget them, even if he tried. It is not that he wanted to die, it was actually the exact opposite. But he knew the risks, as did the other knights. Your life was not guaranteed, but your death almost always was.

"I never wanted that. Ever. Not when I was still alive and still had the chance to look upon your face. To see you smile. For me, perhaps." His eyes brim with fresh, sanguineous tears as he has to recollect his past for much longer than he would ever like, bottom lip quivering ever so slightly. Will just looks away, not wanting to see what he had caused his love to feel.

"You threw yourself at him and you didn't even have to. You made a stupid decision and you know that. You knew you weren't going to survive that fight, *Tristan*." He does not know why he uses that name. It felt proper in that situation though.

"It was foolish, yes. Perhaps I got overconfident from all of our previous victories. I didn't want to die, *Galahad*," he chokes out that name, unsure if he is using it for his own catharsis or Will's. "But in war, there's always a chance you won't survive. I thought that, if I was slain, it would at least be an honorable death. One that would at least mean something. And I only ever thought of you, even as I laid dying, because I knew that having something to live for meant you had something worth dying for, if it meant giving them a chance at a good life." The sire barely registers that the tears have fallen, leaving crimson streaks across his cheeks and nose.

Will swallows and cups his cheeks, using his thumbs to wipe his tears away, "Shhh, it's okay. I'm sorry. I'm sorry I didn't understand."

"It's alright," he answers, unsure if he means it or not as he leans into his lamb's gentle touches.

"It's not, I shouldn't have tried to say you weren't trying. Only an idiot would believe that."

"I didn't want you to have to believe it. I didn't want you to have to hear of it at all." Will frowns while squeezing him, knowing this is his fault. He should have kept his mouth shut and not said a thing.

"I love you, no matter what my past lives may have indicated."

"I love you too, I always have."

"I know," he says with a little sigh, shutting his eyes to better collect his thoughts. Will decides to stay silent and let him have a moment. With another sigh, Hannibal pulls away from him just enough to sit up. Regardless of how Will feels about him after, he still intends to exact his revenge against the village. It may have been Will's home once, but they knowingly wronged them both.

"Is everything okay?" Will asks while sitting up so they can talk.

"Yes, darling," he answers with a nod. The fledgling nods and sighs softly.

"What're you thinking about?"

"About what I intend to do to ensure that we can live safely in our home once more."

Will grins at that, flashing his fangs a little, "I like the sound of that." Hannibal laughs softly.

“How can you be so certain? You don’t even know what I have planned, little lamb.”

“Well I know I like home.”

“That’s certainly true.”

“Mhm, and I’ll do whatever it takes to get us both back safely.” The sire wears his own grin, Will’s current enthusiasm making it seem as though this plan will go smoother than previously expected.

“I know you will.”

“Good. I’m glad you trust me.”

“I always have. And you’ve proven you wouldn’t deny me my life nor my freedom.”

“I don’t think I’d be truly happy if I did.” Hannibal finds himself smiling at that notion.

“I can see that. You risked being exposed or even killed for me.”

“I would’ve slaughtered that town for you.” The taller vampire hums softly, almost knowingly. Unbeknownst to Will, that is his exact plan, except the one slaughtering would be himself and not his lamb.

“I could certainly say the same about you.”

“No one can question our love, then.”

“It endures all adverse conditions, much like the lavender flowers I would pick for you.” Will, or more accurately, Galahad grins and glances over at him while humming.

“Yeah.”

Hannibal and Will leave the cave the following evening. The night air is still warm and fresh as they traverse in the direction of the village. Will is silent for the most part but smiling because they finally get to go home, he can finally lay in the library and read for hours by the fireplace again. Hannibal, however, does not intend to go straight home. The villagers were still on edge after his and Will’s flight into the forest. But without any suspicious deaths, the villagers felt as though it may be unwarranted. Regardless of what they believe, Hannibal’s still a dangerous being. And now, his prey lie in their beds, unbeknownst to the predator lurking outside.

“Hannibal, what’s your plan?” He glances about then looks to his sire, feeling a bit on edge.

“I’m going to eat them,” he says with a flat tone, clearly serious. Will swallows and stares at him for a few seconds.

“All of them?”

“It’s better than they deserve.” Will swallows and rubs his arms, feeling worried about his family even though they treated him so poorly. Hannibal could practically smell the anxiety rolling off of him like waves. Crimson eyes narrow a bit while observing the lamb.

“Tell me, Will: Do you still care for them?”

“They’re my parents, of course I do.”

“Even though they kept you locked away? Kept you from learning of the wonders and pleasures of the world?” Will swallows and licks his lips, wringing his hands together while thinking.

“I feel like I have to love them.”

“You don’t *have* to feel nor do anything,” Hannibal says quickly. He would prefer to exact his retribution with Will by his side. He’s his companion and lover, after all. But the sire has already decided he will do this, with or without his lamb.

“I know.” He whispers, his head tipped towards the ground and his lip wobbling a little. Without another word, the older vampire stands and makes his way into the village. He is

swift. Like the divine hand of God, he quickly doles out his punishment, except far more mercifully. There is no chaos, unlike the late Lord Verger's raid. The only ones who suffer, who know who is taking their life, are the people who strung him up in that hut, as though he were no better than a slain stag from a hunt. Will stays at the edge of his old village, crying silently at the fact that not only is he losing his family this night, but that they really did not care about him in the first place.

The sire returns a while later, soaked with blood.

"I need you to do something for me, darling," he murmurs sweetly while reaching a stained hand towards him. The lamb nods and takes his hand, holding it tight in his own. Hannibal gets Will to his feet and starts leading him through the eerily silent village.

"They're all dead?"

"Not all of them," he answers simply, mouth growing thick with coagulating blood. Will nods as he looks at the dirt for answers it will not provide.

"Are we going home?"

"Soon, darling. Soon." After the few moments of silence following Hannibal's reply, they reach the door to Will's home. The fledgling stares at the door and swallows then looks to Hannibal.

"Am I here to say goodbye?"

"I suppose you could say that."

"What does that mean?"

"Gorge yourself on your captors. Take their strength, their freedom. What they had should've been rightfully yours from the beginning." Will blinks at him, looking shocked and confused. After a second he looks at the floor and shakes his head a little.

"Why?" Only Hannibal's eyes flicker with an emotion akin to disappointment, his face otherwise unchanging.

"They kept you from becoming who you are, who you were meant to be. You were no better than a prisoner to them, my love." Will thinks about his words for a few minutes, rubbing his arms and shoulders in an attempt to comfort himself. Hannibal is not entirely wrong. To his family, he was nothing but a payment for their safety.

"I suppose you're right," he mumbles. Hannibal smiles at his answer, proud of how far his lamb has come since their first meeting.

"With all my knowledge and intrusion," he starts, pulling Will into an embrace. "I could never entirely predict you. I can feed the caterpillar and I can whisper through the chrysalis, but what hatches follows its own nature and is beyond me." The lamb smiles a little at that as he hugs him back, burying his face into his throat. With a hum, the sire tips his head back for him. It is an action full of vulnerability and trust in his boy.

"They're sleeping?" He asks as he moves up to nose at Hannibal's carotid. He purrs softly in response.

"They are. They won't ever have to know what you've done."

"Okay." The younger vampire nods and kisses the other gently before slowly making his way deeper into his childhood home. Hannibal watches his every move intently, curious to see what his lamb does.

When Will reaches his parents', room he allows Hannibal to slip in with him before shutting the door and sliding a small dresser in front of the entryway. Will watches over his sleeping parents for a few moments. He wants to feel bad about this, he really does, but he cannot find it in himself to even care. They had taken his life from him, so he will do the

same. The lamb walks to his father's bedside and just stares him in the face for a moment. One of the few good times he had with this man was when they would go fishing. Then again, he had only ever been four or so times.

Will does not feel any remorse when he starts to rip the man's throat out, nor does he feel bad when he hears his mother scream and the garbled sound of his father trying to beg for mercy. He finds himself enjoying this, taking away someone's life so easily. It makes him feel powerful and just.

'*They deserve this*.'

He repeats that phrase to himself over and over while moving on to his mother, who is crouched in a corner of the room and begging, but Will does not hear it. He does not hear much of anything, aside from the blood rushing through her veins as well as stumbling out of his father. He looks like a beast now, stalking across the room and snatching the weeping woman up by her hair to expose her throat for him. To rip her to shreds like he had done to his father. He does not drink from either of them, though. That is the one thing they do not deserve. They do not deserve to provide someone with something good, something that fills bellies and gives life. They do not deserve to be glorified in that way because they are nothing but filthy pigs. Pigs with meat so tainted that not even a peasant would want to eat from them.

Hannibal watches him with morbid fascination, a proud smile curling the corners of his mouth. The sire's fangs are bared in a grin as the smell of blood permeates the air around them, filling his nose with the scent of murderous sin. This is his lamb's becoming. He cannot help but feel privileged to see such a sight, a marvelous metamorphosis. The juxtaposition of beauty and death, elevating the untouchable into something gloriously breathtaking. It is an art form in its own right. The lamb sent to the slaughter now paints the walls with the viscera of his captors as a wrathful predator. Unfettered violence is Will's true nature and Hannibal is proud that it is himself who brought it out of the fledgling.

When he is done, Will stands and looks down at the mess he had made, not really feeling anything other than hate and disgust. The older vampire walks over to him, hugging him close.

"My beautiful boy," Hannibal whispers while smoothing some of Will's hair back. "You did very well."

The lamb snarls softly and latches onto his neck, grabbing his hair and yanking his head to the side to have more room. In Will's mind this is showing him love, it is showing him that he sees Hannibal as something holy and worthy. That only Hannibal is truly capable of nourishing him. The sire shivers and bares his neck more as he clings to his boy. Will backs him into a nearby wall and keeps working, drinking for a minute or two longer and letting out growls and grunts as his hands travel up the other vampire's body, earning him a soft moan in return. Hannibal observes him through half-lidded eyes, licking his lips a little.

"That's enough, darling," he huffs out, grasping the back of Will's shirt. The fledgling reluctantly pulls away, lapping at the wound to staunch his bleeding even though it heals almost as soon as he starts. The taller man purrs softly.

"There we go. Have you calmed down, sweet boy?" He nods and rests his face in the crook of his neck. With a soft hum, Hannibal rests his cheek on Will's temple. "Let's go home."

"Never want to leave home again."

"You'll never have to, darling."

"I love you."

"I love you, too." Will sighs softly and noses at his neck and shoulders.

"Can we take a bath when we get home?"

“Of course we can, my darling.” And that is exactly what they do. Warm and safe in their castle once more, they bathe together, lazily scrubbing dried blood off of one another.

Their eternal lives are filled with nothing but love for each other, days of passion turning into years of happiness.

End.

Chapter End Notes

And that’s it. I hope you found the ending to be as satisfying as I did. Thank you for being a part of this journey and for all of the kudos/comments you’ve left so far. A sequel in the form of a one-shot is in the works as we speak. Goodbye, for now.

Please drop by the Archive and comment to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!